

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02421-548 Southbridge STU.E STU.144

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Fiskdale

Photograph



Address: 548 Main Street

Historic Name: Wheaton Knight House

Uses: Present: Multiple Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: 1857–1870

Source: Walling 1857, Beers 1870

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboard, Wood Shingle/Wood Trim

Roof: Slate Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): one-story addition, by 1894; attached barn and free-standing outbuilding removed between 1911 and 1925 (Sanborn 1911, 1925); vinyl windows, late 20th century

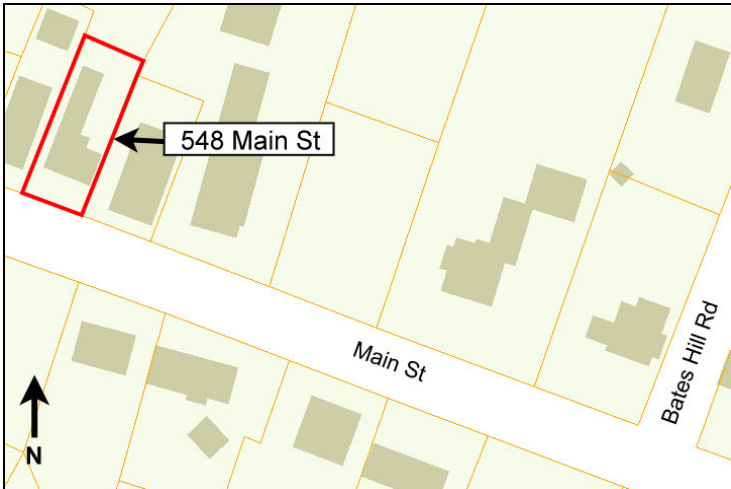
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .14 acres

Setting: The building occupies a rectangular lot on the north side of Main Street in the village of Fiskdale. The parcel is mostly paved and contains a paved driveway along the east side of the house and a parking area to the north.

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
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STURBRIDGE

548 MAIN 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 Wheaton Knight House (1857–1870, STU.144) is a south-facing, Italianate-style, two-and-one-half-story, three-bay, wood-frame building with a one-story, two-bay-by-two-bay, addition enclosing the southeast corner of the house and a one-story ell projecting from the north elevation. The house has a brick foundation, a bracketed end-gable roof, and wood clapboard walls with corner boards and cornice returns. The addition has a flat roof and wood-shingled walls. The roof is pierced by two chimneys. A bay window in the west bay of the south (facade) elevation has paired carved brackets below its roof. The main entrance is in the facade elevation of the flat-roof addition, has a wood surround with fluted pilasters and a dentiled cornice, and is filled with a six-panel door. An arched opening in the gable peak has a one-over-two, wood window, and the second story of the facade has three two-over-two, wood windows. Other fenestration consists of replacement one-over-one and four-over-four, vinyl sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Wheaton Knight House (1857–1870, STU.144) 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).

The subject property first appears on the 1870 Beers map as part of a larger property owned by blacksmith Wheaton T. Knight (1815–1874) (Beers 1870). Knight was born in Providence, Rhode Island, and married Sabra Ann Stebbins Lumbard (1821–1888) in Brimfield in 1837. Sabra Lumbard Knight was a cousin of Maria Lumbard Bates (see Emory L. Bates House, 502 Main Street (STU.130)). In 1870, Knight resided in Sturbridge with his wife Sabra and their daughter Ella (US Census 1870). The Knights had five children: William, Hosea, Frank, Ella, and Wheaton E. L. Only Ella and Wheaton reached adulthood, and only Wheaton outlived his father, dying two years later than him (Find A Grave 2014). By 1898, the property was owned by John B. Day, a painter, who lived with his wife Alice and their son John (Richards 1898; US Census 1870). No deeds have been found to determine when Day acquired the property. Deed research does indicate that the property was likely owned by George and Albert Sikes in 1871 and by William Kirby in 1890 (WCRD 836/536, 1326/354).

In 1900, William Kirby (1862–1913) transferred to his brother James (1867–1927) one-half of a lot of land he owned on the north side of Main Street in Fiskdale, likely the subject property. The Kirbys also owned the adjacent Kirby Drug Store (see Josiah J. Fiske Building, 552 Main Street, STU.145). In 1932, James Kirby's land was transferred to his heirs, Ernest, James, Mary, and Kathryn Kirby, who subsequently sold it to Delphis and Exina Chauvin (WCRD 2565/57, 2577/45). It was likely during the Chauvins' ownership that an attached barn and a free-standing outbuilding at the north end of the property were demolished (Sanborn 1911–1948). In 1959, Delphis and Exina's son Raymond inherited the property, keeping it for ten years before selling it to Clarence and Beatrice Robida (WCRD 4016/542, 4971/549). For the remainder of the twentieth century, the property changed hands frequently until it was purchased by its current owner, Wetherbee and Wetherbee, LLC, in 2005 (WCRD 35469/200). Today the property is mixed-use, with a store and a residence occupying the building.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Find A Grave. "Wheaton T. Knight," 2014. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/134090987/wheaton-t-knight>, accessed August 2018.

Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Sturbridge*. On file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA, 1984.

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. *Southbridge*. New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1894–1948.

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Sturbridge Assessor. Property records, <http://images.vgsi.com/cards/SturbridgeMACards/415-/M415--0B2421--L548-U-.pdf>, accessed February 2018.

United States Bureau of the Census (US Census). *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870. (M593, 1,761 rolls)*. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., ancestry.com database.

Worcester County Registry of Deeds (WCRD). Book/Page (Year). 836/536 (1871), 1326/354 (1890), 2565/57 (1932), 2577/45 (1932), 4016/542 (1959), 4971/549 (1969), 35469/200 (2005).