

# Twitchell/Leland Area

32, 46 Pleasant Street

## [Birdseye view of Twitchell/Leland area](#)

<b>Town</b>	Sherborn
<b>Area</b>	K
<b>USGS Quad</b>	Medfield
<b>Assessor's Sheets</b>	3/9, 3/7
<b>Form #s in Area</b>	
32 Pleasant	117 House 323 Barn, 322 Wagon shed, 321 Hen houses, 320 Shed
46 Pleasant	118 House 325 Barn, 324 Tool shed, 922 Stone walls, 923 Orchard
<b>Photographs</b>	Roll 8
<b>Current Use</b>	Residential/agricultural
<b>Construction Dates</b>	1710, 1844
<b>Overall Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Alterations</b>	House currently under construction at 32 Pleasant St.
<b>Acreage</b>	6.74; .56
<b>Recorded by</b>	Sanford Johnson, April 1999

**X** Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following resources are located within the Twitchell/Leland Area:

- 32 Pleasant Street, 117 house, 320 Shed, 321 Hen houses, 322 Wagon shed, 323 Barn
- 46 Pleasant Street, 118 house, 324 Tool shed, 325 Barn, 922 Stone walls, 923 Orchard

Inventory forms for the Colonial and Greek Revival style houses at 32 and 46 Pleasant Street were completed during the 1981 MHC survey of the town. The purpose of this area form is to document outbuildings and the surrounding landscape. Further documentation can be found on MHC survey forms **117** and **118**.

The Twitchell/Leland Area encompasses the agricultural open space around 32 and 46 Pleasant Street. Little topographical relief exists, providing extensive views in many directions on both sides of the road. The land is currently planted in hay and is divided by an extensive network of stone walls. An orchard exists south of the Leland House (46 Pleasant Street) which adds to the sense of agricultural history still clearly represented in the area.

While only two residences are present, there are at least 8 outbuildings which reinforce the agricultural appearance. Small hen houses, modestly scaled sheds and large barns are surrounded by low stone walls. The two barns are located south of their respective farmhouses.

The Joseph Twitchell House at [32 Pleasant Street](#) was built during the early Colonial Period, ca. 1690-1710. It

is a saltbox form of two stories' height with a simple but symmetrical three-bay facade. The appearance of the house has not changed since the creation of the 1981 **MHC B form #117**. The front door faces south, toward the best solar exposure, the barn and other outbuildings. The farm manager's house was moved to its current location in 1998. A new wing of the Twitchell House is now under construction.

The principal outbuilding is a wood-framed, one and one-half-story, front-gabled barn (**#323**) facing Pleasant Street to the east. This building replaced a burned barn in 1910. The facade is pierced in the center by a rolling vehicle door and a glazed pass door on the right. Two fixed sash and a 6/6 double-hung unit also light the facade. Side elevations are lit by paired fixed sash located high in the walls at a height appropriate for horses and by a second rolling door. Decorative elements consist of gable returns, a molded cornice and corner boards. The roofline is marked by a brick chimney at the southeast corner and by a low gable-roofed, louvered ventilator in the center of the ridgeline. The roof is asphalt shingles, the walls are wood clapboards and the foundation is built of stone. Other 18th and 19th century barns and outbuildings were in place northwest of the house according to old photos.

A one-story, side-gabled wagon shed (**#322**) located behind (northwest of) the barn is partially open to the weather at its eastern end and closed off by a series of glazed swinging doors in the west side. Exposed rafter ends lend it the appearance of an early 20th century building. The wood framed, wood clapboard building houses farm machinery. A second shed (**#320**) is south of the wagon shed and may be intended for small animals like sheep. This is a one-story, side-gabled building with asphalt shingles on the roof and wood siding. A gate covers the opening facing Pleasant Street with no door visible. Two attached hen houses (**#321**) are also in the farmyard. These are diminutive side-gabled wood clapboard buildings with gabled ventilators on the roofs. They are adjacent to the shed and are connected by a series of short fences and gates.

Across Pleasant Street to the east are large fields still being cut for hay. These open areas are divided by long stone walls (**#922**) and lend the house and the entire area its distinctly agricultural appearance.

The William Leland House at [46 Pleasant Street](#) (**#118**) has been significantly altered since it was documented in 1981. It was demolished and rebuilt in 1988 and the ell was lengthened. While the shape of the main block was reproduced, the exterior fabric and windows are modern replacements. Entry porches on the facade existing in 1981 were not reproduced. Like the Twitchell House at 32 Pleasant Street, it faces south toward the barn and other outbuildings.

The principal outbuilding on the property is the mid 19th century gable-front barn (**#325**). Rising two stories, the large building faces Pleasant Street and the Leland House to the north. The facade is pierced with a vehicle door lit from above by a row of transom lights and by a 6/6 sash in the wood clapboard gable peak. Side elevations of the barn, clad in vertical siding, have fixed 6-pane sash along their length. The roof is clad in wood shingles and the foundation is built of cut granite. A pyramidal hipped cupola with weathervane marks the roofline. A smaller gable front building is attached to the northeast corner and now functions as a garage. This is the area's largest building and has been recently rehabilitated.

A one-story, tool shed (**#324**) is west of the barn adjacent to the orchard. This was built in the late 1980s. The walls are clad in board and batten and the roof in wood shingles. It is a front-gabled form that may also serve as a smokehouse or a shop judging by the metal chimney near the eave. The orchard (**#923**) appears to consist of apple trees, like many others in the town, and covers approximately 2 acres. The orchard is surrounded by stone walls (**#922**) that divide the property along axes between Western Avenue, Pleasant Street and the woods to the east.

While the property associated with the two houses in the Twitchell/Leland Area comprises only 7 acres, the views encompass a great deal more. Views are comparable to those at [190 Maple Street\\*\\*](#) and the **Farm Road Estate Area\*\***. All buildings are well maintained.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The early history of the houses at 32 and 46 Pleasant Street has been recorded on **MHC survey forms [117](#) and [118](#)**.

The house at **[32 Pleasant Street](#)** was built around 1710 by the farmer Joseph Twitchell. It remained in the Twitchell/Stone family until the mid-nineteenth century.

George Littlefield bought the farm in 1883. The subsequent owner was his son, Charles O. Littlefield in 1898.

By 1935, the owner was Sewall Fessenden, a partner in a brokerage firm in Boston who appears to have used the property as a country estate. While not living in his other home in Chestnut Hill, he worked on his farm and improved the values of the house and outbuildings by a factor of ten between 1895 and 1935. He built a silo, cottage, water works and a hen house during the same period. The silo does not survive but the hen houses survive with a wagon shed and a secondary shed possibly used for smaller livestock such as sheep. Mr. Fessenden's ownership marks the change at 32 Pleasant Street from a subsistence agricultural property to a leisure property, similar to those in the **Farm Road Estate Area\*\*** and **190 Maple Street\*\***. Agricultural operations have continued to the present time.

William Leland, a farmer and gun smith, built the house at **[46 Pleasant Street\\*\\*](#)** in 1844 and occupied it until his death around 1888. Mr. Leland kept horses, cows, oxen and pigs, as well as a one-acre orchard on his 80 acres. He also worked as a gun smith and was taxed for a gun shop worth \$50 in 1865. Other outbuildings taxed in 1865 were his barn, probably the current building, and two store houses. A third store house was added around 1870 and a hen house around 1890. Mr. Leland's daughter, Amy Leland Fleming assumed ownership of the property in approximately 1890 and operated the farm until about 1930 when Mrs. Fleming's grandson Harold Hildreth became the proprietor. A building labeled "shop" that may be the gun shop continues to appear in tax valuations until after 1945. Mr. Hildreth farmed the land until the 1970s and sold it to the Sherborn Rural Land Foundation, ca. 1986. Some sheds and a milk room were demolished since 1986.

Land around the houses was used in 1939 as pasture on both sides of the road. Orchards were located south of the Leland house at the sharp bend in the road and continue to grow there. Hay was cultivated east of Pleasant Street opposite the Twitchell House and north of the Leland House. Both dairy and poultry products were raised on these farms according to the 1939 WPA maps. The area continues to embody the agricultural character established in the 18th century as well as aspects of leisure agricultural properties seen in the **Farm Road Estate Area\*\*** and at **190 Maple Street**.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1856 Walling map; 1874 Beers map; 1889 Walker map; 1939 WPA map of Sherborn
- Resident directories, 1897, 1913, 1917, 1930-31
- Conversation with Betsy Johnson 12/98
- Tax valuations, 1865-1945
- [Vital Records of Sherborn, Massachusetts to 1850](#)
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - [The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn](#)
- Hurd - [History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts](#)
- 1981 MHC inventory Forms 117, 118

## Sketch Map:

