

29 Coolidge Street



Aaron Stratton House

Form Nos.	9 house, 197 barn
Area	
Town	Sherborn
Address	29 Coolidge Street
Assessor's Map	10/14A
USGS Map	Framingham
Historic Name	Aaron Stratton House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Lisa B. and Dennis B. Isabelle
" Original	Aaron Stratton
Constructed	House ca. 1850-1855, barn ca. 1895
Source	Deduced from maps
Style/Form	Mid 19th century frame vernacular
Architect	
Ext. Wall Fabric	Wood shingle
Outbuildings	Barn
Alterations	Early 20th century rear addition
Moved	No
Acreage	2.00 acres
Setting:	Located near railroad tracks, south of Peter's Hill, situated close to road.
Recorded	August 1981, by Edward W. Gordon
Updated	1999, by Sanford Johnson

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

This rectangular dwelling rests on a granite block foundation and rises 2 1/2 stories to a steeply pitched gable roof. Its 2 bay gable ends face Coolidge Street and the railroad tracks (rear). Its side walls are 3 bays wide. The main entrance is located on the east facade. Its windows are fully enframed and feature caps which are Italianate in sensibility. The attic walls are pierced by a round headed window. A pair of tall brick chimneys project from its roof. This house is covered with wood shingles. They probably cover corner boards. The northeast corner of the house features a projecting bay which was probably added in the late 19th or early 20th century. To the rear of the house is an early 20th century addition.

1999 Update

The house at 29 Coolidge Street (#9) survives nearly as it is described on the survey form completed in 1981. Changes since that time include the removal of two brick chimneys from the roof peak; addition of a shed dormer to the west slope of the roof in the early 1990s; and replacement of the 2/2 sash with modern vinyl units.

The barn (#197) at the Aaron Stratton house on Coolidge Street was built in the late 1890s with elements of the Shingle and Victorian Eclectic styles. Set on a rural road with railroad tracks immediately behind (southwest), the barn's one and one-half story gable end faces northeast. Two large roll-up doors pierce the facade at ground level below two 6/6 double-hung sash in the gable peak. Openings on the left side elevation consist of four double-hung sash, four fixed sash and a pass door which is covered by a shed porch. The roof is clad in slate shingles, the walls in wood shingles and the foundation is built of uncut stone. The foundation may have previously supported a barn that burned in the late 1890s. Decorative elements consist of the flared entry-hood clad in wood shingles over the central vehicle opening in the facade. This hood occupies 2/3 the width of the facade and is the principal Shingle style element. Corner boards, ornamental shingles, gable returns and the classical moldings at the eave lend a Victorian Eclectic sensibility to the facade.

The barn has been altered by the installation of roll-up doors in place of the original rolling doors. Also, the secondary opening in the facade may have been added subsequent to the original construction. The barn is in good condition.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

This house has historical associations with Sherborn's Stratton family. It was built ca. 1850-1855 by Aaron Stratton (presumably a farmer). Born in 1811, he was the son of Abijah and Hannah Bacon Stratton. He married Susanna Russell in 1839 and "resided on his father's homestead, south of Peter's Hill." This house is labeled A. Stratton on the maps of 1857 and 1875. In 1889 it was owned by Aaron's son, Horace J. Stratton (born 1841). A fire destroyed the barn on this property in the 1890's.

This dwelling was part of the wave of house building which occurred in Sherborn during the locally prosperous 1840's and 1850's. Many of the Greek Revival homes at Dowse's Corner, to the south, were built at that time.

In 1929, this house was bought by a Willey family who lived here for 49 years. In 1978, Harry Hill remodeled this dwelling and later sold to the present owners.

1999 Update

Mid-nineteenth century state censuses report Aaron Stratton to be a farmer. Mr. Stratton co-owned his farm with his son Horace in 1875, but it had passed to Joel Stratton by 1895. Property valuations show the Strattons had two barns in 1895 and just one in 1905, corroborating the possibility of a fire. The existing barn was built during that time. According to resident directories in the 1910s-30s, Joel Stratton worked as a farmer and later as a machinist. The uses to which he put his barn building include the storage of hay and machinery, as well as 3 horses, 11 cows and a bull. Esther and John Willey occupied the farm by 1935. Land around the farm in 1939, reflected on the W.P.A. map of Sherborn, was plowable pasture, indicating that the primary land and building use was for dairy production. High, small windows in the south wall suggest the presence of horses, a trend continued by the Willeys, who kept a cow and three heifers as well. The Willeys continued to occupy the house until the 1970s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Interview with Mrs. Esther Willey
- Maps of 1857, 1875 and 1889
- Rev. Abner Morse - History of the Towns of Sherborn and Holliston, 1856

1999 Update

- 1981 MHC B form from survey by Edward Gordon
- 1874 Beers Map; 1889 Walker Map
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- Conversation with Betsy Johnson, 1/99
- History of Middlesex County, Hurd
- Tax valuations, 1865-1945
- 1855, 1865 state censuses
- Visser, Thomas. Field Guide to New England Barns