

177 Farm Road



Joshua Morse House

Form No.	32
Town	Sherborn
Address	177 Farm Road
Historic Name	Joshua Morse House
Ownership, 1981	Richard Saltonstall
Original Owner	Joshua Morse
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Constructed	1759
Source	Morse's History of Sherborn
Style/Form	Georgian with Colonial Revival additions
Architect	Remodeled in 1903 by Joseph Everett Chandler
Ext. Wall Fabric	Clapboard
Outbuildings	Barns
Alterations	North wing added in 1903, porte cochere added 1903, removed in 1920's by Saltonstall.
Moved	No
Acreage	42.00 acres
Setting:	Situated in the heart of the 1st area of Sherborn settlement an area of estates and wildlife reservations in southeast Sherborn. Particularly noteworthy are the gardens to the south of the house.
Recorded by	Edward W. Gordon, June - July 1981.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

During the early 20th century a number of 17th and 18th century houses in the Boston suburbs were transformed into sprawling estates by architects "with reputations as authorities on colonial architecture". Sherborn's Charlescote Farm exemplifies this phenomenon. It is composed of an 18th century main block (the oldest portion dates to 1759) and a north wing which was added in 1903. The main block rises 2 stories to a hip roof. Projecting from the roof's center is a massive brick chimney. Its highly symmetrical 5 bay main facade features a front door flanked by Doric pilasters and a heavy entablature (probably a c. 1840 Greek Revival replacement although it may have been installed along with the dormers during the early 1900's remodeling.)

In 1903 a Dr. Channing hired the Boston architect Joseph Everett Chandler to enlarge and remodel the old Morse Place. He added the 2 1/2 story north wing which possesses a recessed porch fronted by wide round arches supported by classicized posts. (The glass wall of a "greenhouse" presently projects in front of two of the five arches.) A porte cochere which was added to the south wall by Chandler was later removed by the Saltonstalls in the 1920's. (see illustration)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This house was built in 1759 by farmer and Minute Man Joshua Morse (born 1724). He was a direct descendant of Daniel Morse Sr. who built a dwelling on or near the present house's site in 1656. Southeast Sherborn or Boggestow as it was called, was settled in 1652). Daniel Morse's house served as a garrison during King Phillips Wars, (mid 1670's). He was chosen to be one of the settlement's first five selectmen. He called his southeastern Sherborn holdings "The Farm". Both Farm Road and Farm Pond were named in honor of Morse's domain. Farm became this road's official name in the early 1900's. It had been unofficially known as the Village Road to Dover or Trinity Street - the latter because of its proximity to the Pilgrim Church.

The oldest section of the present Charlescote Farm was built in 1759 at the time of the birth of Joshua Morse's first child. (He married twice). It remained in the Morse family until 1902. Albert P. Morse (1863-1902) was the last family member to live here. His distinguished career as an entomologist began as a child when he collected wild life specimens about his home. He was encouraged by the well-known naturalist Amory Leland Babcock who lived at 123 North Main Street. Morse became well known in a wide range of scientific interests. He was affiliated with Wellesley College and the Carnegie Institute of Washington D. C. In addition he was curator of Natural History at the Peabody Museum in Salem. He also aided in the drawing of government geodetic survey maps.

In 1903 a Dr. Channing purchased the old Morse homestead and had the house enlarged and remodeled ("Colonial Revivalized") by the Boston architect Joseph Everett Chandler (1864-1945). Mr. Chandler was born in Plymouth Ma. and was professionally educated at M.I.T. graduating in 1889. He "acquire a reputation as an authority on colonial architecture". Early in his career he was affiliated with a Mr. Dwight who died in 1893. Chandler became identified with the restoration of various historical landmarks in Massachusetts, including the Paul Revere House, Old Corner Book Store and the House of the Seven Gables. At Charlescote Farm Chandler unobtrusively blended colonial revival additions and elements with the existing 18th c. structure.

By the 1920's the Richard Saltonstalls owned this property.

It is probably fair to say that the estate which evolved from the old Morse house "core" was of precedent setting importance to its immediate neighborhood. By the 1920's southeast Sherborn had become firmly established as the town's area of country estates near the Charles River, Farm Pond and wild life refuges.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

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