

104 Maple Street



Fitts House, November 1998

Form No.	263, 264-shed, 265-garage
Town	Sherborn
Address	104 Maple Street
Assessor's #	7/4
USGS Quad	Medfield
Historic Name	Fitts House
Uses: Present	Residence
Original	Residence
Constructed	ca. 1936
Source	Owner
Style/Form	English Revival
Architect/Builder	Theo and Earl Fitts, builders
Exterior Material:	
Foundation	Concrete, brick
Wall/Trim	Stucco
Roof	Asphalt shingle
Outbuildings	Shed; stone walls at street; garage
Alterations	Additions in rear, 1955, 1962
Condition	Excellent
Moved	No
Acreage	2.4 acres
Setting	Wooded
Film Roll/Negative	Roll 2
Recorded by	Sanford Johnson, May 1999

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The one and one-half-story, side-gabled English Revival style house at 104 Maple Street is set back from the road on a wooded lot. Three bays divide the stuccoed facade with its arched center entry and slightly projecting gabled entry hood. Casement sash with quarrel panes are set close to the eave and flank the Gothic arched entry. Half-timbering ornaments the stuccoed side walls, the entry and the windows on the facade. An oriel window with quarrel panes occupies the west gable peak. Stucco covers the brick of the interior chimney at the ridgeline. An ell, constructed in two phases during the mid-20th century, extends from the rear elevation of the building. Stone walls mark the edge of the road and a winding path leads through the English garden that is the front yard. This is one of two English Revival cottages in Sherborn. The other is at **99 Coolidge Street****.

A one-story, side-gabled, wood-shingled shed, built in 1944 as a goat shelter, is in the rear of the lot. A rear shed-roofed addition has been made to the building. A one-bay, gable-front garage with no door and a flat-roofed rear addition is at the roadside east of the house. The gable is clad in ornamental scurl-cut siding. Walls are vertical flushboard and the foundation is wood planks.

The Fitts had a barn some distance behind the house for horses. The foundation is still visible. They also built a one-room house in the 1940s for Robert Kitson, Theo Fitts uncle - an artist. It was on the northwest side of the property. It burned down.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

This house was built on land formerly owned by George Fitts who deeded it to Theo (Babsy) Fitts. (George Fitts was a relative of Earl Fitts, Theo's husband.) The Fitts built much of the house themselves and lived here from 1936 until 1955 when they moved to Millis, Massachusetts. The Fitts subsequently wintered in Florida and eventually moved there permanently. At the time of the Hurricane of 1938, they were building the garage and then used lumber from toppled trees for the floorboards in the living room. They kept goats in the shed they built in the back yard in 1941. In 1955, the subsequent owner, Mrs. Johns, added the first of two rear ells, upgraded the kitchen and bath and added a heating system. In 1963, the Grotons, the house's 4th owners, added the second ell. They continue to occupy the house.

Theo and Henry Kitson, Babsy's parents, were successful sculptors. Theo had owned the family home and land on Western Avenue in Sherborn from approximately 1916 to 1926. Mr. Kitson was the creator of the statue of the Minuteman John Parker on Lexington Common in 1900**, Admiral Farrugut** in South Boston and numerous other sculpted works. Mrs. Kitson created the WWI Statue in Hopkinton**, among many others. Babsy helped her mother work on the Victory** statue of a horse and rider at Hingham Harbor in 1927. Mr. Kitson gave his daughter and son in law a sunburst panel that is located over the fireplace, and letters from father to daughter indicate he may have been responsible for the design of the arched entry, also used at Mr. Kitson's Tyringham, Massachusetts studio.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Conversation with Betsy Johnson 12/98.
- Tax valuations.
- Interviews with Martha Groton, daughter of current owner, William Groton.
- Henry Hudson Kitson and Theo Ruggles Kitson Files, Sherborn Library;