

# 13 Mill Street



*13 Mill Street, November 1998*

**Form No.** 272

**Town** Sherborn  
**Address** 13 Mill Street  
**Assessor's #** 8/71  
**USGS Quad** Medfield

**Historic Name**

**Uses: Present** Residence  
**Original** Residence

**Constructed** 1951

**Source** Assessor's records  
**Style/Form** Ranch/Contemporary

**Architect/Builder** Dorothy Pelzer, architect; Bertram B. Johansson, builder

**Exterior Material:**  
**Foundation** Concrete  
**Wall/Trim** Stucco  
**Roof** Undetermined

**Outbuildings** Attached garage built by Ternes; freestanding barn (1951)

**Alterations**

**Condition** Good  
**Moved** No

**Acreage** 3 acres  
**Setting** Wooded

**Film Roll/Negative** Roll 2  
**Recorded by** Sanford Johnson, May 1999

## **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

The Ranch/Contemporary style residence at 13 Mill Street is a low building with a gradually sloping roof, walls built partly of glass and stucco walls. The low sloping roof gives way in places to flat sections over the garage and a rear ell. Deep eaves and tall windows on the south side contribute the passive solar heating system, plus hot air through hollow tiles. Casement windows and an interior brick chimney are in evidence. At the time of construction, the roof was fibre mixed with concrete and tar papered over.

An International Style simplicity and austerity mark some aspects of the exterior. The house is set back on its wooded lot. This is a stylish example of modern domestic architecture common in the 1950s and 1960s. Other examples are at **46 Prospect Street\*\*** and **177 Lake Street\*\***.

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

The house at 13 Mill Street was constructed in 1951, by the first owner, Bertram Johansson for his wife Jeannette and family. During construction, the family occupied the barn (not visible). The designer of the house was Dorothy Pelzer, a ca. 1950 M.I.T. architecture-school graduate. Mr. Johansson was a journalist and editor employed by the Christian Science Monitor. He wrote about social and political events in Latin America and won the Maria Moors Cabot Award for first describing the influence of Communism in Castro's Cuba. He was also known for his pie-baking abilities. The current owner is Bill Ternes, a noted watercolorist.

The 50s were a period of rapid suburbanization in the town and entire region. Sherborn had implemented zoning by-laws in 1939, a time when people were beginning to realize the value of semi-rural land for housing that was located within easy driving distance of employment centers. The town's multiple-acre zoning made residential construction more attractive. From Sherborn, residents could drive quickly to work in Boston, Medfield, Ashland and Framingham, among many other semi-urban communities. The Ranch style house was promoted across the country as a convenient, efficient residence requiring less interior cleaning and less exterior refinishing, all with the advantage of built-in, easy-to-use features like appliances and furniture.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES**

- Conversation with Betsy Johnson 12/18/98.
- Tax valuations.
- Assessor's records.
- Comments of builder's daughter, Margit Johansson;