

46 Western Avenue



Leslie Philbrook House

Form Nos.	160 house, 361 shed #1, 362 barn, 363 shed #2
Area	
Town	Sherborn
Address	46 Western Avenue
Assessor's Map	1/3
USGS Map	Medfield
Historic Name	Leslie Philbrook House
Uses: Original	Residence
Present	Residence
Ownership, 1981	Edith V. Philbrook
" Original	Leslie Philbrook
Constructed	House ca. 1926, barn and sheds ca. 1980
Source	Edith V. Philbrook and Florence M. (Philbrook) Wentworth
Style/Form	Concrete block vernacular
Architect/Builder	Leslie Philbrook
Ext. Wall Fabric	Concrete blocks
Outbuildings	Shed
Alterations	
Moved	No
Acreage	3.3 acres 1981, 33 Acres 1999
Setting:	Situated at foot of Brush Hill Road on western side of Western Avenue. Fields to the rear of the house; General Motors' Framingham plant is located a mile to the north.
Recorded	October 1981, by Edward W. Gordon

Updated 1999, by Sanford Johnson

Film Roll/Negative Roll 7

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1981 Survey

This concrete block house is one of Sherborn's more recent architectural curiosities. It is the only house in Sherborn whose fabric consists of concrete blocks although several garages are composed of this material. It rests on the foundation of a ca. 1890 dwelling. (This old house was 2 1/2 stories tall, had a gable roof and was painted yellow.)

The present house is also 2 1/2 stories tall and is crowned by a wide gable roof whose attic walls are faced with multi-colored asbestos shingles. Its main facade (east gable end) is three bays wide. The cement blocks have been creatively used to suggest quoins at its corners and a "string course" of projecting blocks separates the first and second floors. The joints of the concrete blocks are plainly evident lending a rusticated look to this unusual structure.

1999 Update

The house at 46 Western Avenue (**#160**), constructed of concrete blocks, has been sheathed in wood shingles since it was described on the survey form completed in 1981. A one-story, flat-roofed, enclosed porch with a deck on the roof has also been added at the west wall. The current barn and sheds were built in 1983.

The principal outbuilding on the property at 46 Western Avenue is a Victorian Eclectic style, side-gabled bank barn of two stories (**#362**), built in 1983. The front of the first floor of the barn is at grade while the rear is one story below. A low, broad wall gable articulates the facade and lends a Shingle style sensibility to the building. Two vehicle openings pierce the facade and three windows with 6/6 double-hung sash light the sides at the groundstory. Two more sash are in the side-gable peak. Additional vehicle and pass doors are in the side walls below the grade of the facade. The northerly openings are protected by a gabled hood. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles, the walls in wood shingles and the foundation is built of concrete or another material with a coat of stucco. Decorative elements include the prominent ventilator with louvered openings and pyramidal hipped roof, gable returns, simple trim at the windows and doors and plain corner boards.

South of the principal barn is a small shed with shingle siding and plain trim identical to the barn (**#361**). A third shingled outbuilding, north of the barn, is even smaller than the first shed but shares the exterior materials (**#362**). All outbuildings are sited on the crest of a long gradual hill providing views of the lowlands to the west.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

1981 Survey

This house replaced a frame dwelling which burned during a blizzard on January 20, 1925. The current house was built on the foundation of the old Haynes House. On December 26, 1906, Leslie Philbrook of West Natick, owner of a large tree farm, bought this property from either Gardner Haynes or his son, Nelson. They were contractors who apparently built the first house ca. 1890. Mr. Philbrook, his wife and three daughters moved to 60 Brush Hill Road after the disastrous 1925 fire. Apparently the fire started in one of the barns that were attached to the house - the house might have been saved if it had been cut off

from its service buildings. Mr. Philbrook constructed the present "fire proof" house out of cement blocks. Mrs. Philbrook refused to move into the house until it was finished - it wasn't until May 1926 that this house was ready for habitation.

Note: Still intact from the old Haynes Place are front steps which are composed of large slabs of finely dressed granite.

1999 Update

Susan Philbrook and her husband Leslie were the original owners of 46 Western Avenue (built 1926). According to the 1935 tax valuations, they kept a horse, 17 cows, 2 heifers and 3 bulls in their barn and on their 95 acres. The existing barn was built in 1983.

A storehouse is among the items assessed in 1935-45. The Philbrooks sold the farm to Michael and Susan Humphrey in 1983. The barn and two sheds share exterior materials and design intent, and were built in 1983. The second shed may be a well house or springhouse, given its small size and its isolated location in a field away from the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

1981 Survey

- Interview with Edith V. Philbrook and Mrs. Florence M. (Philbrook) Wentworth, daughters of Leslie Philbrook
- Joseph Blanchard's reminiscences
- Maps of 1875 and 1888

1999 Update

- 1981 MHC B form from survey by Edward Gordon
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn and A Guide to Sherborn, 1974
- Tax valuations, 1865-1945
- State censuses, 1855, 1865
- 1939 W.P.A. Map