

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SBR.70
Historic Name:	Collins House
Common Name:	Pheasant Farm
Address:	55 Flagg Rd
City/Town:	Southborough
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	33-11
Year Constructed:	c 1818
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Federal; Greek Revival
Use(s):	Abandoned or Vacant; Agricultural; Dairy; Orchard; Poultry Farm; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Brick; Wood Clapboard; Wood Foundation: Granite; Stone, Uncut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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Massachusetts Historical Commission

33-11

Marlborough

70, 645

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125



Southborough

(neighborhood or village)

55 Flagg Road

Collins House

dwelling

dwelling

early 18th-C./ca. 1818

owners' research; visual assessment

Federal, with Georgian wing

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite and fieldstone

Wall/Trim brick and wood clapboard

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures woodshed;

19th-C. barn, with carriage-house wing

Major Alterations (with dates) major ex-

pansion in early 19th century

Condition good

Moved [x]no [] yes Date N/A

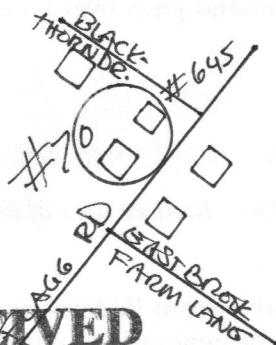
Acreage 69 acres

Setting At corner of Blackthorn Dr., in area

of late-20th C. single-family houses

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



RECEIVED

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultants

JUL 03 2000

Organization Southborough Historical Comm.

MASS. HIST. COMM.
Date February, 2000

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [] *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This large house is one of a small group in Southborough that may actually be two houses combined into one. The main building is a very wide ~~five-by-three~~-bay, 2 1/2-story brick house with a high, clapboarded, enclosed front gable, and four exterior-wall chimneys, one near each corner--a type which represents a transition between the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The windows are 6-over-9-sash, set into molded surrounds, and have wooden shutters--paneled at the first story, louvered at the second. The first- and second-story facade windows have splayed brick lintels. Under the main gable peak is a large oculus, filled in with wood. The main entry is one of the most elegant Federal doorways in Southborough, with a wide elliptical fanlight and half-length sidelights divided into curvilinear panes with leaded tracery. The door, true to the Federal period, has six panels. The house cornice is molded and boxed, with a marked roof projection at the main gable. In the early twentieth century, the house had a wide facade veranda on Tuscan columns, with a turned balustrade and a brick base, probably added by Edward Collins.

Just overlapping the northeast corner of the brick house is a large hip-roofed wing which was apparently a free-standing eighteenth-century house. Its long asymmetrical facade is five bays at the first story, and four at the second. The windows are 6-over-6-sash, with louvered shutters; the slightly off-center door has six raised panels, and is set into a molded architrave, surmounted by a frieze and a high, molded cornice. The east elevation of the wing is two bays: toward the rear is another door under a high frieze and projecting cornice; toward the front is a wide, segmental-arched opening--possibly a former carriage entry, now set with a multi-paned window. One large chimney is situated on the northwest part of the rear roof slope.

This property has one of the most remarkable outbuilding survivals of any of Southborough's rural properties. Facing the end of the wing is a large, vertical-board English **barn** (#645) with a slightly banked, vertical-board wagon entry in its west side. The entry has a pair of cornice-high interior sliding doors with two rows of long vertical panels. Beside it to the south is one 6-light window under a heavy molded cornice, then a walk-in 4-panel door. On the east side of the building, opposite the main wagon door, a remnant of a long multi-light transom indicates the former position of another door that opened into what is now one of the most intact, fieldstone-wall-lined barnyards in Southborough. This barn, which in the second half of the nineteenth century was consistently valued higher than the house, has a full basement story which opens south into the barnyard by means of two doors with vertical-board, interior sliding doors. This roof of this south end of the barn extends forward over the gable to form a hay hood--possibly a later alteration. The barn was significantly reduced in size in about 1980.

Extending west from the northwest corner of the main barn is a long one-story, shed-roofed, clapboarded garage (a former carriage- or wagonhouse), with a large panel-and-glass overhead garage door, and 6-over-6-sash windows.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

According to local historian Louise Simpson, writing in 1904, the large gable-front Federal house was built for **Amos Collins** (1784-1826), and passed "from father to son for three generations, for over 100 years". Amos Collins married Polly Abbott in 1809. Judging from the style and the large pedimented front gable, if Ms. Simpson's explanation is correct, the house would have been built several years after

[x] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

55 Flagg Road

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.
70, 645

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

their marriage. Amos was the son of Mark Collins, Jr., who married Abigail Parker in 1771, suggesting that the Georgian wing may have been built for Mark and Abigail around the time of their marriage, or somewhat later. If it dates to an earlier period, it may have been the house of Mark Collins, Sr., about whom little is known.

Another possible succession of ownership was proposed in 1989 by some Collins descendants, who came to Southborough from Texas to do some deed research. The documents they examined in 1989 pointed to a different line of descent, from Ezekiel Collins, who married Rebeckah Graves in Lynn in 1721. Ezekiel and Rebeckah were in Southborough (then part of Marlborough) in 1724 when their son, William was born. William inherited his father's house in 1748, two years after he married Mary Nichols. Judging from the exterior appearance of the hip-roofed wing, however, it would not have been built much before the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century, (although an earlier small house might be concealed within it.) There were also at least two other early houses with Collins family associations in the vicinity which have been demolished. Adding to the tantalizing bits of information related to the property are three coins found in one of the brick walls of the later part of the house--dated 1787, 1814, and 1817. Further research will be necessary to clarify the exact succession of ownership of both parts of the house, and an interior inspection of the wing would be advisable to assess its period of construction. In the meantime, the map evidence, which shows "W. Collins" as the owner in 1857 and 1870, and "EF Collins" in 1898, tends to support Louise Simpson's attribution to the Amos Collins line.

Amos and Polly Collins had at least six children, three boys and three girls. Their eldest son, **William** (b. 1813), who married Charlotte Fay in 1847, eventually acquired or inherited his father's property, which covered over 155 acres. In 1850, while his mother was still alive, they apparently shared the acreage equally. At that time William owned eight cows, his mother nine, and they grew hundreds of bushels of corn, oats, and potatoes, as well as some hay and rye. They produced a large amount of butter for sale in 1850--1200 pounds for William, and 1367 for Polly.

Polly Collins died in 1870 at the age of 79, and William Collins inherited the whole 155 acres. By that year he had added a bull to his livestock, and owned both the large barn, a storehouse, and a carriage house. He later added a hog house

William Collins died in 1894, and Charlotte in 1898. The house passed to their son, **Edward F. Collins**. He had a much larger dairy herd, consisting at one time of 48 cows and a bull. He also raised chickens, and had a five-acre orchard. He owned the farm, which by then was 158 acres, into the early years of this century. In 1909-1910, however, he built a new house on Latisquama Road at the town center, and gave up the farm.

For many years in the early part of the twentieth century, the owner was **Harris D. Eaton**, who increased the acreage even further, and continued to operate it as a commercial dairy farm. In 1936, at the height of the Great Depression, he had a herd of nearly fifty cows, a bull, and 200 chickens.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

55 Flagg Road

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.
70, 645

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1831; 1857 (W. Collins); 1870 (W. Collins) 1898 (EF Collins); 1937 WPA maps.

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.

Old Southborough: a Photographic Essay. Southborough Historical Society, 1981.

Simpson, H. Louise. Old Houses in Southborough. Unpublished manuscript, 1904.

Southborough Historical Society files.

Town of Southborough: Vital Records; Assessor's Reports, various dates.

US Census: agricultural schedules, 1850.



View east

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community
Southborough

Property Address
55 Flagg Road

Area(s)

Form No(s).
70; 645

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible only in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Forbes/Schuler, Consultants

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The well-preserved Collins House meets Criterion C of the National Register at the local level as a unique example in Southborough of a 2 1/2-story gable-front brick house with a clapboarded, enclosed front gable and four exterior-wall chimneys, one near each corner--a type which represents a transition between the Federal and Greek Revival styles. It also has one of the most elegant Federal doorways in Southborough, with a wide elliptical fanlight and half-length sidelights divided into curvilinear panes with leaded tracery. It may also be significant for its hip-roofed, clapboarded east wing--possibly a mid-eighteenth-century house.

The property is also significant under Criterion A as the farmstead, which still includes its English barn, of one of the largest and most prosperous of the nineteenth century farms in the southeast part of Southborough--covering 155 acres under William Collins as late as 1870.

In spite of the recent development of much of the old farmland around it, the house retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.



PL-6 701

163 MAR 2		
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MISSION
Boston

2. Town

Southborough

Street address

Flagg Road

Name

Pheasant Farm

Use: original & present

dwelling

Present owner

For Sale

Open to public

no

Date

Style

Source of date

Architect

OR part of Area #

3. CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard and Brick Stone Other

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard

Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 5 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 3 4

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed clapboard Barn

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4

PORTICO

Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Front/side Ornament Brick house, clapboard peak with circular ornament

Entrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: Fan light and Side lights

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied 6/9's

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street

Property has feet frontage on street

Recorder

For

Photo # no neg.

Date 1971

SEE REVERSE SIDE

BLACKTHORN DR.

N
↑

701
Flagg

RELATION OF SURROUNDING STRUCTURE

SBR. 70

1. Outbuildings _____
2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal
Predominant features _____
Landscape architect _____

3. Neighboring Structures

Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.
Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern

Use: Residential Commercial Religious Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

PORCHES: 1 3 3 4

STORIES: 1 3 (3) 4

CHIMNEYS: 1 3 3 4

BOOF: (High) Sample for HIB Mansard

MATT COVEN: wood of (High) stone of

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: HIB Regular Low material

4. DESCRIPTION

3. CONDITION Excellent Good (Fair) Deteriorated Moved Altered Added

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner: _____

Deed Information: Book Number _____ Page _____, _____ Registry of Deeds