

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.21
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Burnett, Joseph House
<b>Common Name:</b>	Deerfoot Farm
<b>Address:</b>	84 Main St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Southborough
<b>Local No:</b>	53-1
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Altered beyond recognition; Second Empire
<b>Use(s):</b>	Abandoned or Vacant; Agricultural; Dairy; Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Agriculture; Architecture; Religion
<b>Area(s):</b>	SBR.A: Main Street Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Slate Wall: Stone, Cut; Stone, Uncut; Wood; Coursed Rubble; Brown Stone; Schist; Granite Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
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Massachusetts Historical Commission

53-1

Marlborough

A

21

22

Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125

291-292

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

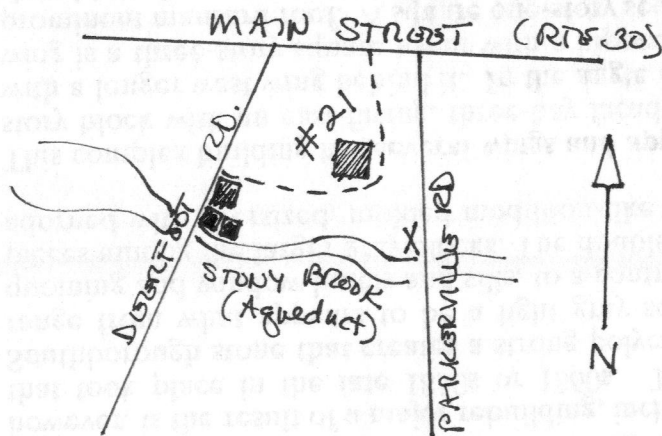
Southborough centerAddress 84 Main StreetHistoric Name Joseph Burnett HousePresent dwellingOriginal dwellingDate of Construction 1849, with major  
update ca. 1860Style NobleForm Second EmpireArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite blockWall/Trim mixed stoneRoof slateOutbuildings/Secondary Structures stone shop:
ca. 1848; stable/carriage house--ca. 1870s;  
wood summer house, ca. 1850s
Major Alterations (with dates) mansard roof  
story added--ca. 1860s; mansard tower roof  
replaced with hip; front porch removed--early
20th centuryCondition goodMoved [x]no [ ] yes Date N/AAcreage 4.71 acresSetting On open section of Main St. linedwith stone walls and mature trees; betweenDeerfoot and Parkerville, on bank of brook.

## 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.

Recorded by Anne Forbes, consultantOrganization Southborough Historical Comm.Date JUL 08 1999 June, 1999

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [x] *see continuation sheet*

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

While some local research has placed the date of this building as early as 1846, family records indicate that the Burnetts moved into their new house in 1849. Much of its present appearance, however, is the result of a major rebuilding, including the addition of the high slate mansard roof, that took place in the late 1850s or 1860s. The building is constructed of a variety of local Southborough stone that creates a strong polychrome effect, as the natural hues of the material range from what appears to be a light gray schist to another dark gray stone used in corner quoining and window lintels and sills, to a contrasting warm brown stone interspersed as smaller pieces among the larger gray blocks. The double-hung windows are wood, as is the main cornice, adorned with oversized, molded modillion-like brackets.

This complex building has several wings and appendages. The core of the house is a high 2 1/2-story block with an east-facing, three-bay facade. A short full-height wing extends to its south, with a longer west wing behind it. In the angle between the rear of the main house and the west wing is a three-story square tower with a hipped roof. The tower was once much higher, with a prominent mansard roof. A square one-story section northeast of the tower with a distinctive red-slate hipped monitor roof is apparently a billiard room.

Windows throughout the house are mainly 6-over-6- or 4-over-4-sash. Pedimented, pilastered dormers with 6/6 sash are set into the nearly vertical lower faces of the roof. The main east facade is three bays wide, with a somewhat severe appearance due to the loss of its wide porch. The wide center entry, recessed into a quoined surround of rock-faced gray granite, has a large, varnished double-leaf door with round-headed lights over single panels. Early photos show that the facade windows had louvered wood shutters, and that the center second-story window was tripartite, with what appear to be French doors and a pilastered surround with segmental-arched pediment above it. A wide "piazza" spanned the main facade, and a balustraded open terrace continued north along the drive.

The east facade of the south wing has paired 4/4 sash at both first and second stories, with a narrow 6/6 toward the north end. Projecting from the south wall of the wing is a flat-roofed one-story den or sunroom, which echoes another of similar design abutting the north end of the main block. Viewed from the south, the south wing is one-bay deep, and the west wing behind it is three bays long, punctuated by segmental-arched window openings crowned with five small stone blocks. The segmental-arched theme of the west wing is continued in a southwest entry in what appears to have been a former one-story kitchen or pantry ell. Fronting the entry is a modern wooden deck.

The view of the rear (west) elevation reveals the square tower, tucked into the angle of the two-bay width of the main house and the west wing. The tower has one window on each face at first and second stories, and a pair of narrow 4-over-4-sash at the third, all set into segmental-arched openings. Northeast of the tower is a feature that was becoming fashionable in luxurious American country houses by the Civil War era--a one-story billiard room. Many billiard rooms were designed, like this one, on a square plan, and often had this type of hipped roof with a monitor skylight in the center to light the billiard table. The monitor windows appear to have been filled in here, but the general form remains, along with the distinctive red slate of the roof. The wide rear chimney is another typical feature, marking the location of the large fireplace which warmed the room. (Cont.)

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



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 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Southborough

Joseph Burnett  
HouseArea(s)  
AForm No.  
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## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Four tall interior brick chimneys pierce the main roofs of the house--one in each wing and two, asymmetrically placed, in the main block. These massive, blocklike chimneys represent a rebuilding of the early twentieth century; they replaced what appear in historic photographs to have been more sculptural corbeled or pilastered chimneys.

Since the nineteenth century the spectacular setting of this house has been altered only by the building of a modern house at the southeast corner of the grounds, well screened by trees. It otherwise retains its park-like surroundings, with mature specimen trees that include a huge copper beech tree, a weeping beech, weeping cedar, a line of tall pines along Main Street, and a double row of sugar maples flanking the long drive up to the house. Stone walls remain along both the Main Street and Deerfoot Road streetfronts, and remnants of a granite block retaining wall are still in place just downhill from a small grove of trees south of the house. In place of the demolished front porch, a narrow grassed terrace with a granite-block retaining wall now fronts the main facade.

Three distinctive outbuildings are clustered at the southwest corner of the property, in the angle of Deerfoot Road and Stony Brook, which was channeled as an aqueduct in the 1890s. Most unusual is the two-story gable-roofed "stone shop" (# 22) located on the bank of the brook, just below the 1890s stone dam. It was built in 1848 as the headquarters for the building crew of the mansion, and its position so close to the water indicates that a water wheel in its high basement story may have once turned machinery that aided in preparation of the stone, or in other building activities. This little building is constructed of the same combination of stone as the house, and, like the house, has a slate roof. It is currently in deteriorated condition, with large holes in the roof, and boarded-up windows and doors. What appear to be four large window openings line the lower wall on the west, Deerfoot Road side, with second-story window openings aligned above them. The north gable end has a six-panel door mounted high in the wall, with a boarded-over door opening below it and a lunette opening under the gable peak. A wooden cornice at the unboxed eaves is in deteriorated condition.

Close against the east wall of the shop, but standing as an independent building, is a rare example of what appears to be a wood-frame Gothic Revival summerhouse (# 20). Also in very deteriorated condition, it is a one-story structure with a very steeply-pitched hipped roof pierced by a distinctive narrow pointed-arched dormer on its east slope. The board-and-batten siding is consistent with the building's Gothic Revival form; the asphalt shingle roof is a twentieth-century feature. Large empty window openings fill each side of the building. A historic photo taken before 1897 shows this building in a slightly different position, apparently further east on the bank of the brook before it was channelized for the Boston water system. At that time it also had a low pointed steeple at the west end of the roof.

Just northeast of the shop and summerhouse, facing north over a curving drive, is a large 1 1/2-story wood-frame mansard-roofed carriage house/stable (# ), with a small stone-walled paddock extending to the south behind it. In contrast to the house and shop, this building is clad in wood shingle and stands on a brick foundation. The roof, which has a polygonal cupola in the center, is slate on its lower slopes, asphalt shingle on the upper sections. The windows are 2-over-2-sash, including those in the hip-roofed dormers. The main carriage entry is located in the center of the north side of the building, under a large mansard wall dormer that retains its double-leaf, vertical-board hay door and a slender copper finial. The overhead garage door in the carriage entrance is a modern replacement. (Cont.)

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Southborough

Joseph Burnett  
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## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

A flat-roofed stable wing extends to the west, displaying six small stall- or stanchion windows high in the wall facing Deerfoot Road, and a glass-and-panel walk-in door facing the drive. The wood trim of this building includes flat unadorned cornerboards, window surrounds, and water table, and the same type of widely-spaced, modillion-like cornice brackets as the main house.

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.*

84 Main Street is significant as the home of the man who was arguably the best-known and most influential Southborough citizen in the town's history, **Joseph Burnett** (1820-1894). Apothecary, founder of nationally-known Burnett's Flavoring Extracts, of St. Mark's School, St. Mark's Church, and of Deerfoot Farm, the family enterprise which at one time supported nearly half the town's workforce, he was also the principal benefactor of the Southborough Town Hall and Public Library. Joseph Burnett's name is still familiar to most Southborough residents, who live with the results of his vision and philanthropy every day.

Educated at first in the Southborough schools, Joseph Burnett commuted to Worcester's English and Latin schools during his teenage years, and graduated from Worcester Technical College at the age of seventeen. For a few years he apprenticed to a prestigious Boston chemist and wholesale druggist, Theodore Metcalf, becoming a partner in the business, which became Metcalf & Burnett Chemical Company, when he was twenty-four. Amassing a considerable fortune in a short period of time, in 1847 he began to buy farmland along the south side of Southborough's Main Street and along Stony Brook in the vicinity of the old Sawin mills. He married Josephine Cutter in Boston in June of 1848, and the house they built here over the next year was apparently designed as their country house, the seat of what would at first become a "gentleman's farm" in the fashion of wealthy Boston businessmen of the time. The little stone shop (#11) on the bank of the brook was completed first, as it served as headquarters for the building crew working on the mansion. A house belonging to blacksmith Jackson Arnold that was standing on the property were moved to another location nearby.

After the mansion was finished, while continuing with the drug supply business in Boston, when in Southborough Dr. Burnett turned his attention to developing his farm. He imported one of the first herds of Jersey cattle to the United States, and installed an old childhood friend, Will Crouch, as his farm manager, providing living quarters for him in the little stone shop. During the 1850s the farm and its operations continued to expand, specializing in dairying, but soon adding a slaughterhouse and some prize pigs. It was at this time that the farm was named Deerfoot Farm, after the impression of a deer's hoof that the Burnetts' eldest son, Edward, found in a rock near the bank of the brook.

In the 1850s, Joseph Burnett was a prime force behind bringing the Agricultural Branch Railroad through Southborough on its northward swing to Marlborough, an enterprise which speeded transport of goods to market, benefitting all Southborough's farms, including Deerfoot Farm.  
(Cont.)



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

In 1855 he sold his half of the Metcalf & Burnett partnership, and went into business for himself, as Joseph Burnett & Co., makers of flavoring extracts, with headquarters first on India Street, later on Central Street, Boston. The company's best-known product, Burnett's Vanilla Extract, is still made, nearly 150 years later.

While apprenticed in Boston, Joseph Burnett had left his old Congregational roots to join the Anglican, or Episcopal faith. Mrs. Burnett was also a devout Episcopalian, and as early as 1850 they were employing Irish immigrants of Anglican, rather than Catholic, backgrounds on their farm, and arranging to hold Episcopal services at various locations in Southborough, often at their own home. In 1853 Joseph Burnett drew up a declaration of trust to establish an Episcopal Church in Southborough as a family trusteeship. By the end of the decade, services were being held in town more regularly, and in 1860, when Deerfoot Farm manager Will Crouch got married, resigned, and moved to Southville, Dr. Burnett renovated the upper floor of the stone shop as a small Episcopal chapel. Informal services were held there for a few months, and in December of 1860 a group of eleven Southborough men, meeting in the living room of the Burnett mansion, incorporated the first official Episcopal parish and society in Southborough as St. Mark's Church. Joseph Burnett was named Senior Warden, the most powerful position in the church, which he held until his death. St. Marks' first official service was a service of Holy Communion held on Whitsunday, 1861, in the chapel in the stone shop. For a short time the little building served its new purpose well, but with a growing congregation, coupled with the untiring efforts of Joseph Burnett, it was superseded by the building of **St. Mark's Church** (Form #29), which opened its doors in June of 1863. In later years, Southborough assessor's records refer to the stone shop as a "stone store house", and by 1891 as a "stone store house and lodge house"

By the time he had accomplished his long-standing dream of bringing an Episcopal Church to Southborough, Joseph Burnett had clearly become the town's most prosperous citizen. By then he and Mrs. Burnett had a large family, eventually including six sons to educate. The eldest, Edward, was already at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, and in a brief interchange over seeking a place for the second, Harry, St. Paul's headmaster suggested that Dr. Burnett might look into establishing a church school for boys in Southborough. Thus began a new dream, which Joseph Burnett followed with the same passion and commitment that had led to the founding of St. Mark's Church. Two years later, on September 13, 1865, St. Mark's School opened its doors in the center of Southborough in the buildings of the old Brigham Estate, which had been acquired and donated by Joseph Burnett. One year later, due in good measure to Dr. Burnett's support and encouragement, the Fay School opened on Main Street across from St. Mark's Church, as a boarding and day school for younger grades that would function partly as a "feeder school" for St. Mark's.

After the Civil War, Joseph Burnett continued as the prime influence behind several other civic enterprises in his home town. When the Town Hall burned down in 1869, he chaired the building committee for its replacement, and made a large contribution to the building fund. In the early 1870s he purchased the old Franklin Este house for a rectory and parish hall for St. Mark's Church, and served on the town committee for the centennial celebrations in 1876. (Cont.)

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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Joseph Burnett  
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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

In 1871, Joseph Burnett passed on the management of Deerfoot Farms, which by then covered over 500 acres both on the Burnett property south of the brook and at satellite locations, to his son Edward. By that time the farm was producing a very successful line of pork sausages. Under Edward Burnett's management the farm's dairy and sausage business doubled and then tripled. In 1889, at the peak of Southborough's post-Civil War prosperity, in its dairy operations alone Deerfoot Farms produced 55,000 pounds of butter, 49,000 quarts of cream, and nearly a half-million gallons of milk, shipping 1,000 to 2,000 gallons daily to Boston by train. Edward Burnett, with his brother Robert as Treasurer, expanded the central farmstead with several large outbuildings near his own residence across the brook from his parents' mansion, also adding housing for the farm workers, including a large shingle-style dormitory.

As Joseph Burnett relinquished some of the day-to-day Deerfoot Farm responsibilities, he appears to have turned more to the life of a country gentleman. An active member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, he planted specimen trees and shrubs at his homestead, some of which remain today. He had always kept horses and several carriages; assessor's records indicate that he built the large shingled, mansard-roofed stable for his carriages and five horses sometime during the 1870s. The second floor of the stables contained rooms for his longtime coachman, John Colleary.

After Joseph Burnett died in 1894, his homestead was under the ownership of his heirs. It was apparently occupied by his second son, **Harry Burnett** (d. 1927) and his family well into the early twentieth century. While his brothers Edward, and later Robert, were running Deerfoot Farms, Harry Burnett, at first with Robert and later alone, had taken over at the Burnett Extract Company in Boston. He was eventually succeeded as President there by another brother, John T. Burnett, who may also have occupied the family mansion for a time. Upon his father's death Harry succeeded to the position of Senior Warden of St. Mark's, holding that office for over thirty years. As generous with his time and money as his father had been, Harry Burnett served for many years as Southborough's Tree Warden; upon his death he left a substantial fund for the building of a new parish house and rectory for St. Mark's Church.

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

- Maps and Atlases: 1857: J. Burnett; 1870: J. Burnett res.; 1898: Jos. Burnett's est.  
 Doucette, Paul A. "Deerfoot, the Aristocrat of Farms", The Milk Route, #1, 6/1/1987.  
 Cunningham, Esther Lowell. Three Houses. Boston: Thomas Todd, 1955.  
Deerfoot Farms, Southborough, Mass., 1872-1913. (Promotional booklet for dairy farm.)  
 Hurd, D. Hamilton, ed. History of Worcester County, I. Philadelphia: JW Lewis, 1889.  
The Marlborough Directory, various dates and publishers.  
 Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.  
 Simpson, Louise. "Old Houses in Southborough". Paper given to Southboro Woman's Club, 1904.  
 Southborough Public Library: Hollinger photograph collection.  
 Town of Southborough: Assessor's Reports, various dates.  
 Worcester Historical Museum: newspaper files.



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Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community	Property Address
<u>Southborough</u>	<u>84 Main Street</u>
Area(s) A	Form No(s). 21

## 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 Anne Forbes

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

The Joseph Burnett House meets Criteria A and C of the National Register individually (as a complex) for its associations with two generations of the Burnett family, who profoundly influenced the economic, educational, social, religious, and architectural development of Southborough from the 1840s through the early twentieth century. Built as the country home of Joseph Burnett, it is particularly significant as the residence of the founder of nationally-important Burnett's Flavoring Extracts, and of state- and regionally-important Deerfoot Farms, St. Mark's School, and St. Mark's Church.

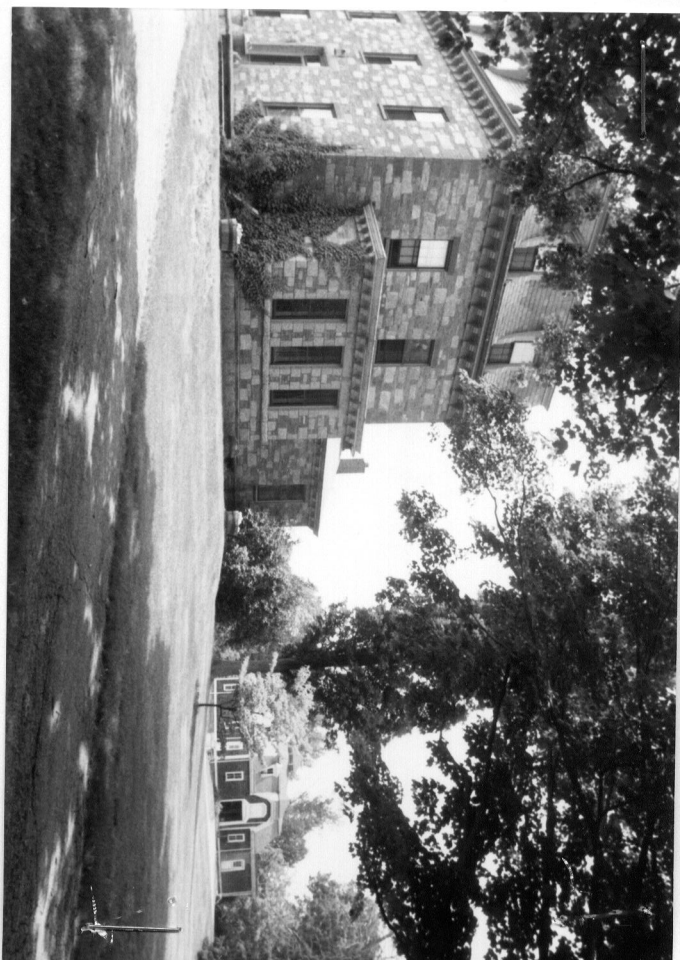
The property is also significant under both A and C as an example of a lavish country estate of the middle years of the nineteenth century, updated with additional buildings and landscaping of the latter part of the century. Despite some deterioration and the loss of some architectural features, it meets Criterion C for its well-preserved Second Empire architecture, executed in local stone, in an intact landscape setting.

The property is also eligible as part of a potential district of well-preserved estates, institutions, and nineteenth- through early-twentieth-century residences along Southborough's Main Street at the town center.

The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.



Main facade.



View southwest-house and stable



View east-rear of house.



View south-north end of house.



View from Deer Foot Road, with house and stable.



Stable.



Stone shop, west side.





Stone shop - north end.



Summer house, with edge  
of paddock



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

SOUTHBOROUGH

84 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

SBR.A

SBR.21

*Supplementary photographs received July 2014*



Carriage House and stable (SBR.292)



Stone shop (SBR.22)

*Interior, Burnett House, July 2014, Kate Matison, photographer*



Front entrance, looking east



Front hall, stair

**RECEIVED**  
**JULY 31 2014**  
**MASS. HIST. COMM.**

*Continuation sheet 1*



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

SOUTHBOROUGH

84 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

SBR.A

SBR.21



Library (1st floor)



Dining room (1st floor)



Reception room (1st floor)



Bedroom – 2nd floor



Bedroom – 2nd floor



Stair – 2nd floor

# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

SOUTHBOROUGH

84 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

SBR.A

SBR.21



Bedroom – 3rd floor



Window detail, 3rd floor looking northwest



PHD 21

(A)

Southborough PI South Ave main

address 84 Main Street

al use dwelling

nt use "

nt owner Irvin Garfield

o public

1800's Style Mansard

1846 - H.D.S.C. style

Education  
Government  
Literature  
Music

Military affairs  
Religion/philosophy  
Indians  
Development of town/city

Date 1800's Style Mansard  
Source of date 1846 - H.D.S.C. style  
Architect

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added

#### 4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: \_\_\_\_\_

WALL COVER: Wood \_\_\_\_\_ Brick Stone Other \_\_\_\_\_

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard sedimented domers  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 \_\_\_\_\_ PORTICO \_\_\_\_\_ Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Front/Side Ornament: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied \_\_\_\_\_

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards \_\_\_\_\_

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

6. Footage of structure from street  
Property has \_\_\_\_\_ feet frontage on street



Recorder \_\_\_\_\_

For \_\_\_\_\_

Photo 1-15A Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE REVERSE



## RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

SBR.21

## 1. Outbuildings

Garage / stable

## 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)

Built in 1846 and since extensively remodelled, including the entire third floor with its mansard roof, by Joseph Burnett, founder of St. Mark's School. ①

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

1898 Joseph Burnett

2460-461

① HDSC Report 1972

## RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner:

Deed Information: Book Number 3068 Page 180-1, Worcester Co. Registry of Deeds

Original yellow form: Eligibility file

Copies: Inventory form

Town file(w/corresp.)

Macris

NR director \_\_\_\_\_

Community: SOUTHBOROUGH

**MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER**

Date Received:

Date Reviewed: 7/30/14

Type: ☒ Individual☐ District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name: Joseph Burnett Estate

Inventory Form: SBR.21,22,291,292

Address: 84 Main Street

Requested by:

Action: ☐ Honor ☐ ITC☐ Grant☐ R & C☒ Other: planning

Agency:

Staff in charge of Review:

**INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES****DISTRICTS**☒ Eligible☐ Eligible, also in district☐ Eligible only in district☐ Ineligible☐ More information needed☐ Eligible☐ Ineligible☐ More information needed**CRITERIA:**☒ A☒ B☒ C☐ D**LEVEL:**☒ Local☐ State☐ National**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Betsy Friedberg**

The Joseph Burnett Estate includes a mansion house, barn, and other outbuildings on just under five acres in a parklike setting south of Main Street, on the edge of Stony Brook and the Wachusett Aqueduct and at the edge of Southborough's town center.

The estate was the home of Joseph Burnett, one of the most influential citizens of Southborough in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and his family for several generations. Burnett was the founder of Burnett's Flavoring, a manufacturer of extracts based in Boston, through which he amassed a large fortune in the 1840s. He purchased the property on Main Street in Southborough in 1847 and shortly after his marriage to Josephine Cutter of Boston in 1848, began construction of a house that would be their country estate.

The first building erected here was the stone shop building, which was said to serve as headquarters for the building crew working on the mansion. The mansion house was completed in 1849 but substantially rebuilt in the late 1850s or 1860s, at which time its high slate mansard roof was added and its present Second Empire-style appearance achieved. The building is constructed of local stone in a mix of colors, trimmed with wood modillions and brackets. The house has a complex form with several wings and appendages, including a square tower with a

hipped roof (formerly a higher tower with mansard roof) and a square, single-story wing with hipped monitor roof, once a billiard room. Multiple brick chimneys pierce the slate-clad roofs. The mansion interior retains a number of fine details, including staircases and rails, paneling, cornice moldings, mantels, doors and hardware, and window and door trim.

Other buildings remaining on the property include the abovementioned stone shop (1848), built of stone with a slate gable roof; a rare but deteriorated Gothic Revival-style summer house or bungalow (ca. 1850), one story in height, with board and batten siding and a steeply pointed-arched dormer, which was moved from its original location on the bank of the brook to a site closer to the shop (the relocation occurred in the 1890s, around the same time the brook was channelized as part of the development of the Boston water-supply system); and a wood-frame, mansard-roofed carriage house/stable (ca. 1870), with a stone-walled paddock. The property is served by a curved drive leading from its entry on Main Street, and there are sweeping lawns as well as areas of specimen trees. A low stone wall surrounds the property.

Joseph Burnett was responsible for bringing one of the first herds of Jersey cattle to the U.S., to his property in Southborough, known in the 1860s as Deerfoot Farm. Burnett was a prime force behind bringing the Agricultural Branch Railroad through Southborough, was a founder of St. Mark's Episcopal parish (first services held in the upstairs room of the stone shop, which served as a chapel; St. Mark's Church opened nearby in 1863) and donor of its rectory and parish hall, a founder of St. Mark's School (established 1865 on land in Southborough's center that he purchased and donated), benefactor of the Fay School (1866), and chairman of the building fund to replace the Town Hall after it burned in 1869. In 1871, Burnett turned management of Deerfoot Farm, with lands extending well beyond the 5 acres of the mansion estate (approximately 500 acres south of Stony Brook), to his son. Deerfoot Farm was a significant supplier of dairy and pork products for Boston markets. While Burnett continued involvement with the Burnett Extract Company, he also worked on developing his gentleman's estate, adding specimen trees (some of which survive), and building a large carriage house and stable for his horses and carriages. After Burnett's death in 1894, his sons took over the farming activities as well as the Burnett Extract Company. The property remained in the Burnett family until the 1940s.

The Burnett Estate retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, meeting National Register Criteria A, B, and C at the local level. It is historically significant for its associations with the development of Southborough in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as an example of a lavish country estate. It is architecturally significant for its well-preserved Second Empire-style mansion and associated outbuildings, set within an intact landscaped setting. It is also significant for its associations with Joseph Burnett, the town's major benefactor and arguably most influential citizen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Burnett Estate also stands in an area of other estates, institutional and residential buildings along Main Street, potentially eligible as a National Register district.