

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

11 - 79

Marion

MRN.XXX

Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village

Address: 297 Wareham Street

Historic Name: Benson House

Uses: Present: Residential (two-family)

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1850

Source: Visual analysis

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Fabric Quonset hut

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Dormers (20th c.)

Condition: Poor

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.35

Setting: Sparsely settled residential neighborhood on former farmland north of Sippican Harbor. Dwellings are small- to medium-scaled wood-frame houses on medium- to large-sized lots. The area was developed between 1800 and 1900 with the early housing stock consisting primarily of Capes and Greek Revival dwellings.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

297 Wareham Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Area(s) Form No.

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

297 Wareham Street occupies a small rectangular lot on the northwest corner of the intersection of Wareham Street and Parkway Lane. The house is set back from the street and faces east, fronting an expanse of patchy lawn. Dense vegetation lines the western portion of the property and the southern property line along the south elevation of the house. A gravel driveway enters the property from Wareham Street along the north elevation of the house and ends at a fabric Quonset hut sited off the northwest corner of the house near the western property line.

This wood-frame dwelling comprises a one-and-one-half-story, front-gabled, three-bay-by-five-bay house. Its unusual gambrel roof form has been altered with the addition of continuous shed dormers on both roof slopes. The house appears to have been constructed in the mid-19th century and retains several late 19th century details. Investigation of the structural framing and interior features of the house would be required to better determine its age. It rises from a high granite block foundation and is clad in wood shingles. The asphalt shingled roof carries corbelled brick chimneys at the north and south roof slopes.

The house is trimmed with narrow corner boards. The side hall main entry at the southernmost bay at the façade (east elevation) contains a ca. 1900 wood-paneled door with molded trim and a rectangular light. It has a flat wood surround and a molded Italianate door hood. The door fronts a two-step cast stone stair that ends at the lawn. The windows at the house are primarily single, double-hung, two-over-two sash with flat surrounds; they are asymmetrically placed at the side elevations. There is a small, hip-roofed, one-bay projection at the south elevation.

297 Wareham Street reflects no particular architectural style but has late-19th/early-20th century details including the two-over-two window sash and the front door with its Italianate hood.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the 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.

The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor which leads into Buzzards Bay. As the name suggests, Wareham Street runs from the northern portion of the village historically called Old Landing to the town of Wareham. Maritime businesses dominated the economy in Marion and the occupations of its homeowners until the mid-19th century, when the advent of rail service began to facilitate tourism. However, this section of the town north of Sippican Harbor remained focused on farming until the 20th century.

The subject house cannot be identified on any of the historic maps of Marion and its title history is unclear. It stands on a parcel of land which was originally owned by Consider Benson (1800-1877) and his wife Mary Dennis Dean (1804-1875). Consider Benson was the son of Asa Benson (1754-1837) and Elizabeth Perry (1760-1803). According to the 1860 and 1870 censuses he was a farmer, like most of his neighbors. He and Mary Benson had three children who survived to adulthood, two of whom would inherit this property: Hannah F. Benson (b.1829), who married Thomas Swift (b.1825), and Minerva A. Benson (1831-1909), who was married to William W. Handy (1828-1886). In 1880 the property was conveyed by Minerva A. Handy to her sister Hannah F. Swift. The appearance of the subject house and its granite block foundation suggest that it was constructed in the mid-19th century, probably on land owned by Consider Benson.

In 1911 Hannah Swift conveyed the property to her granddaughter Hannah Ada Frank (b.1874), who was married to Benjamin B. Briggs (b.1871). The 1916 city directory (Wareham) listed Benjamin Briggs as a teamster living on Wareham Street. The 1924 directory also showed him living on Wareham Street and operating the Eastside Market. Hannah Briggs conveyed the property

Continuation sheet 1

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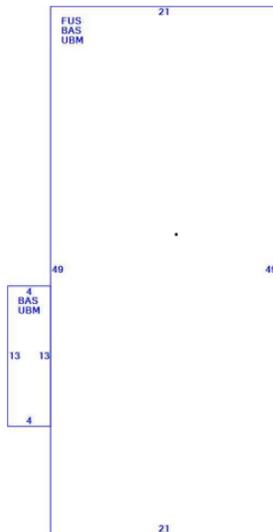
in 1942 to her daughter Helen M. Briggs (1898-1981), who was married to Joseph Anthony McAvoy. The property was purchased from the estate of Helen M. Briggs in 1985 by Sherman and Steven Briggs. The property was subdivided, and the subject house on its 0.35-acre parcel is currently owned by the Briggs family.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
07-06-2005	30875-245	Sherman Briggs and Steven Briggs	Sherman & Alice Briggs
05-02-1985	6086-144	Estate of Helen M. McAvoy	Sherman Briggs and Steven Briggs
06-26-1942	1834-218	Hannah A. Briggs	Helen M. McAvoy
05-15-1911	1080-551	Hannah F. Swift	Hannah A. Briggs
09-02-1880	526-551	William W. & Minerva A. Handy	Hannah F. Swift

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org: census records, vital records, city directories
- Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: George H. Walker & Co., 1879
- Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903
- Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855* H.F. Walling
- McMaster, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
- Olive Hill Sommers, *Three Centuries of Marion Houses*. Marion, 1972.
- Plymouth County Registry of Deeds
- Rosbe, Judith. *Marion*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
- Rosbe, Judith. *Marion in the Golden Age*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009.
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- Smith, Pete. (ed.) *A Picture Postcard History of Marion, Massachusetts*. New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, 2008.



Assessor's card plan