

FORM B – BUILDING

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

16 81

Marion

N,
AA

MRN.570

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (month / year): February 2023

Town/City: MARION

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -
Main Street (MRN.AA)

Address: 56 Main Street

Historic Name: Isaac and Clarissa Handy House
(original house), Eben and Mary Morss
House (replacement)

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1830, rebuilt ca. 1900*
*See Description and Narrative

Source: Vital records, title research

Style/Form: Queen Anne/ Four Square

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards, wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):*

Rear, two-story addition (late-20th c.)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16 acres

Setting: The surrounding area includes historic houses sited relatively close to the street and to each other along Main Street. This house is also set close to the street on a slight rise. The raised front yard is secured by low granite curbstones. The front yard is landscaped with foundation plantings. A gravel driveway leads along the west side of the house.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

56 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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.

As detailed below, there was a house here that dated back to ca. 1830, but that house appears to have been replaced (or moved). The current house has the boxy form and hip roof associated with Four-Square houses. "Four-Square" is alternately viewed as an architectural style, or a house form onto which ornamental features were sometimes added that represented a particular style – e.g. Colonial Revival or, in this case, Queen Anne. Four Square houses were popular from the ca. 1890s to 1930s.

A house with a rear ell that shares the west wall plane of the main block is shown on the 1855 Walling Map of Marion (Figure 5) and the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 6). However, the 1903 Atlas map (Figure 7), the 1908 and 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 1, 2), and the current Assessor sketch (Figure 3) show a boxy main block with a *centered* rear ell.

The house rests, like most historic houses in Marion Village, of a granite block foundation. The elevations are clad in a combination of wood clapboards and scalloped wood shingles, with beltcourses running above the first story windows and below the second story windows. This use of different siding materials and patterns to enliven elevations is a feature of the Queen Anne style. A shallow, two-story bay extends from the right (west) side elevation. The one-story rear ell shown on the 1908 and 1933 Sanborn maps appears to have been replaced by the current two-story ell.

The front elevation is three bays wide. The front entrance and window above are slightly separated from the other two bays. Fenestration consists of modern, replacement 2/2 double-hung sash. The front entrance consists of paired, multi-paned doors protected by a hood with a hip roof that mimics the main roof form.

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.

While there had been some economic activity and residential development in Sippican Village prior to the Revolution, residential development accelerated in the early-1800s, as happened in many coastal Massachusetts towns, with boat building, whaling, coastal schooner trade, and the salt industry driving the economy. The construction of the First Congregational Meeting House in 1799, now Marion General Store (140 Front Street, MRN.22), also helped make Sippican Village the center for spiritual and civic life.¹ Residential (and limited commercial) development was initially concentrated along the Front Street/Main Street axis, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, additional streets had been laid out, but Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village (Figure 4).

The house has an Assessor date of 1830. Title research traces back to 1835, when Isaac Handy sold this property, with a dwelling house, to Paddock Bates.² That deed states that Isaac Handy had acquired the property in an 1832 deed. Unfortunately, that deed has not been discovered, so we do not know if that deed also referenced a dwelling house. Isaac Handy (ca. 1800-1858) married Clarissa Barrows (b. ca. 1804) in Marion in 1828. Isaac was listed as a carpenter (1840 census) and ship carpenter (1850 Census). Perhaps he built the original house here himself in ca. 1832 after buying this land.

¹ Marion was first settled in 1679 as Sippican, a district of Rochester, and was not incorporated as a separate town until 1852. The name Sippican Village continues to be used interchangeably with Marion Village.

² Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 210/ Page 234.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

56 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

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Photo 2. View from Main Street, looking southeast.



Figure 4. 1855 Walling Map of Marion, Sippican Village Inset Map.



Figure 5. Detail of 1855 Walling Map (arrow added).

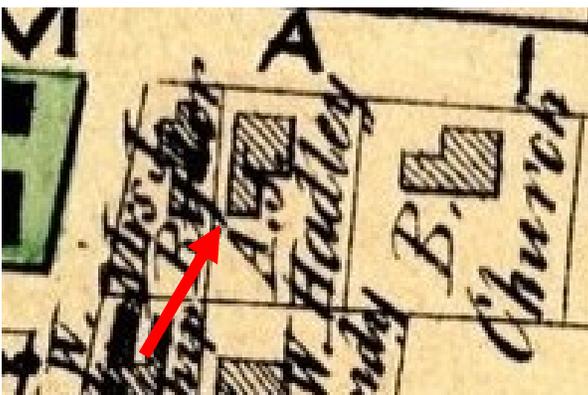


Figure 6. Detail of 1879 County Atlas (arrow added).

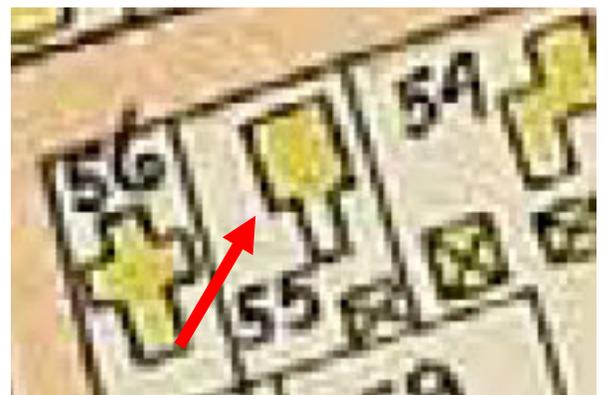


Figure 7. Detail of 1903 County Atlas (arrow added).

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 Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant for Sippican Historical Society
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

This property is a contributing resource in the combined Areas of Wharf Village-Sippican Village (MRN.N) and Water Street (MRN.L), hereinafter referred to as Marion Village.*

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History. Marion Village contains the great majority of buildings connected to Marion’s historical maritime development beginning in the late-18th century. With the rise of saltmaking, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19th century, as did residential development in Marion Village. In addition to the houses built by those in the maritime industry, Marion Village contains numerous buildings and structures associated with maritime industrial activity, including a chandlery, sail loft, cooperage, and wharves. As Marion Village’s prosperity became linked to Sippican Harbor, Marion Village also became the commercial, political and institutional center of the town.

Marion Village is also recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation. Starting in the mid-19th century, maritime activity declined significantly. The decline in maritime activity was eventually replaced by the rise in the 1870s of a summer colony as Marion Village emerged as an elite summer resort. This was facilitated by the arrival of train service in the 1854. Summer visitors, including artists and writers, were drawn Sippican Harbor’s beauty and tranquility. A large hotel, the Sippican Hotel, was located at the corner of South and Water Streets, and a few houses were converted to inns. While the hotel was town down in 1929, a large livery complex built by the Hiller Brothers at 147 Front Street (MRN.216) is extant. They provided horse-drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican Hotel, and ferried guests back and forth between the hotel and the train depot. In Marion Village, ownership (or occupancy through rental) of many houses began to shift from local maritime families to seasonal residents, including nationally-noteworthy politicians, businessmen, artists and writers. During this period, Marion Village also saw the addition of high style, architect-designed summer cottages and recreation resources.

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Marion Village is a remarkably intact historic town center, including a compact collection of historic dwellings, along with a few churches, schools, commercial buildings and recreation buildings. Marion Village contains a great concentration of Federal and Greek Revival houses; and examples of later Victorian-era styles, including high-style examples of summer house architecture along Sippican Harbor and large institutional buildings not found elsewhere in Marion.

The great majority of resources in Marion Village retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.

*The potential Marion Village district boundaries include surveyed areas within the boundary of MRN.N completed in 2020-2022 for Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y), Cottage Street (MRN.Z), Main Street (MRN.AA), South Street (MRN.AB), Upper Pleasant Street (MRN.AC), and Upper Main Street (MRN.AH).