

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

16-69	Marion	N, AB	MRN.299
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Town/City: MARION

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village -
South Street (MRN.AB)

Address: 54 South Street

Historic Name: William R. and Sylvia Ball House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1899-1903]

Source: Deed research, 1903 Atlas

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: Unknown/ Bourrienne Ball (poss.)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite, fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Two-bay, side-gable garage (Photo 3)

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

Front and side porches removed (dates unknown)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16 acres

Setting: This parcel is located at the west end of South Street. The surrounding area includes late-19th and early-20th century houses, most set fairly close to the street on small lots. An asphalt driveway leads to a detached garage behind the house. The front yard is landscaped with lawn and foundation plantings.

Photograph



Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): February 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

54 SOUTH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.

This is one of a pair of modest, gable-front cottages built in the late-19th century, the other being the Frederick Ryder House at 56 Main Street (MRN.300). The form of this house consists of a 1½-story, gable-front block with a stepped-down side ell on the left (east) elevation, and a very shallow, stepped-down ell on the right (west) side elevation. This form is shown on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 2). The major alteration since then has been the removal of the open porch that spanned the front and left (east) side elevations, which has been replaced with an open deck.

There is a shed-roofed dormer in front of the east ell, and a broad shed dormer on the rear elevation. An open porch on concrete blocks spans part of the rear elevation. The house rests, like most 19th and early-20th century houses in Marion Village, on a raised fieldstone/granite foundation, and the roof is clad in asphalt shingles (likely wood shingles originally), with a molded box cornice with partial returns across the gable ends.

The house is a modest example of the Queen Anne style. The Queen Anne style, popular from ca. 1880-1910, employed different roof shapes and surface materials to enliven a building's elevations and create a more "picturesque" effect than earlier, more formal styles. In this case, the side ells of varying widths, the front hexagonal bay and the shed dormer animate the house. Siding materials are not employed here to animate the elevations except the beltcourse that spans the front gable above the second story windows. Perhaps original uses of wood clapboards and/or patterned shingles have since been replaced.

Fenestration includes wood 2/1 windows that may be original or early windows. The front side hall entrance has a replacement door set in a flat surround.

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, maritime-related development accelerated into the early-1800s, as happened in so 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 development was initially concentrated along Main Street, and the harbor became the site for maritime-related utilitarian buildings and wharfs. By the time the 1855 Walling Map was prepared, Main Street from the harbor west to Pleasant Street was the most densely developed street in the village, but there was also substantial residential development along the eastern block of South Street. This block of South Street is labelled "(contemplated)" on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas (Figure 3), but by the early-20th century, however, a substantial number of houses (and a fire station) had been built along this western block of South Street, including this house (Figure 4).

Much of the land on this side of South Street was owned by James T. Wittet in the late-19th century. James T. Wittet (1833-1908) was a sailmaker, and son of sailmaker James Wittet (1799-1872) who lived and worked at what is now 1 Main Street (MRN.218). James Wittet himself bought land on the north side of South Street and built the ca. 1899 house at 47 South Street (MRN.295), likely as a rental property. He was listed in the 1903 and 1907 Rochester Directories living on Front Street.

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.

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James T. Wittet sold the land on which this house was built in 1899 to Capt. William R. Ball of New Bedford.² We do not know exactly when the house was built, but it was in place by the time the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas was prepared. William R. Ball (1829-1921) married Sylvia Sowle (1833-1919) in Westport in 1850. They lived in Westport and later in New Bedford. They never lived in Marion, but their son and daughter-in-law, Bourrienne M. and Sylvia (Coggishall) Ball were living here as of the 1910 US Census. Bourrienne (b. 1859) was listed as a house carpenter, so perhaps he built this house himself. Their daughter, Jane Ella Ball (1890-1959), had married Edward W. Baylies (1881-1951) in Marion in 1916. They moved in with her parents, who left her the house. In the 1940 and 1950 US Census, the Baylies were living on South Street and Edward Baylies was listed as a Selectman. The Baylies did not have any children, and this house was sold out of the family after Jane's death in 1959.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and Atlases:

1855, Walling, H. F. *Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*, 1855.

1879, *Atlas of Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Geo. H Walker & Co, 1879.

1903, *Atlas of Surveys of Plymouth County*. Springfield, MA: L. J. Richards Co., 1903.

1908, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1908.

1933, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1933.

Ancestry.com – Vital records.

Dempsey, Claire. MHC Area Form AB, South Street, 2021.

Gordon, Edward. MHC Area Form N, Wharf Village, 1998.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

Sippican Historical Society Collections.



Photo 2. View from South Street, looking southeast.



Photo 3. Garage, looking southwest.

² Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Book 796/ Page 229.

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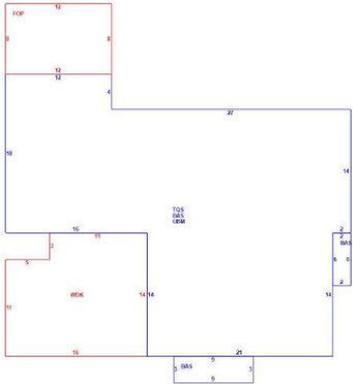


Figure 1. Marion Assessor Sketch (decks, porches in red).

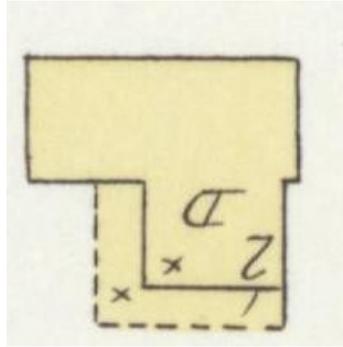


Figure 2. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

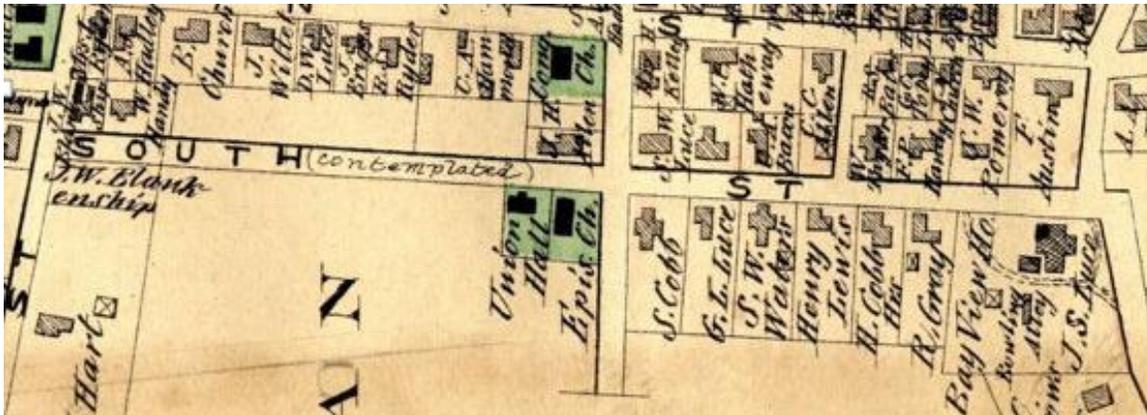


Figure 3. Detail of 1879 Plymouth County Atlas.

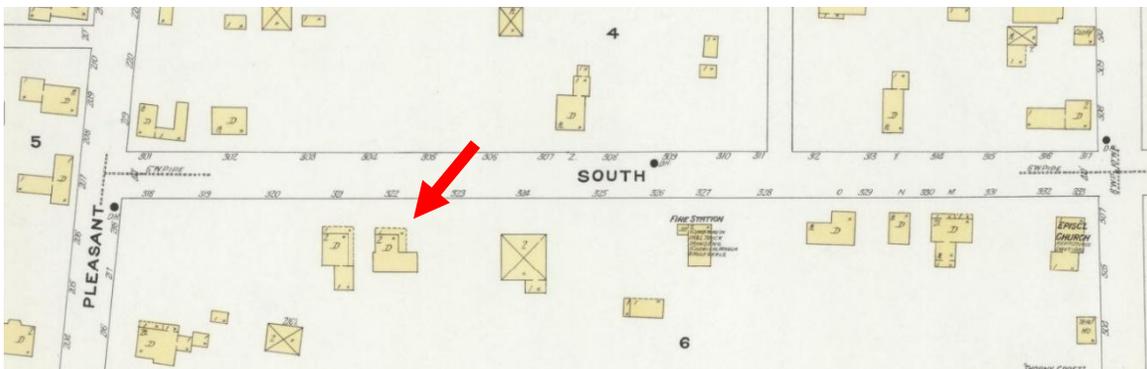


Figure 4. Detail of 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (arrow added).

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).