

MAY 15 1989

553

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS

FORM B - BUILDING

AREA	FORM NO.
F	618

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Town Southbridge

Address 491 Eastford Road

Historic Name John M. Wells House

Use: Present residence

Original residence

DESCRIPTION

Date 1927

Source assessors records

Style French Chateau

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric stone and brick

Outbuildings garage (1970's) (NC)

Major Alterations (with dates) none

Condition Excellent

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage 15.8 acres

Setting set back from road on large landscaped grounds with stone entrance gate, still semi-rural area with golf course next to north.

Recorded by S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Commission

Date May 1986

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

- Ⓐ 18/744 340/4660 520
- Ⓑ 18/744 340/4660 400
- Ⓒ 18/744 250/4660 120
- Ⓓ 18/744 040/4660 160
- Ⓔ 18/744 120/4660 360
- Ⓕ 18/744 270/4660 540

UTM REFERENCE see above

USGS QUADRANGLE Southbridge, Mass-Conn

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The John M. Wells House is significant for its association with the town's early 20th century real estate development on the town's rural outskirts and its stylish French Chateau design. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership and are historically associated with the property.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

This large Chateau style house is distinguished by the substantial appearance and high quality workmanship which were typical of the best residential construction in the United States during the 1920's. It was the largest and most imposing residence to be built in Southbridge since the first decade of the 20th-century. Inspired by a historical European style, this house contrasts strongly in appearance with the clean, rather severe lines of the modern International Style of the large and equally well-built house his cousin, George B. Wells built nearby only a few years later in 1932 (form #F-603).

Built of stone and brick, the house features a turret at the corner of the ell on the facade, casement windows and vast slate roof.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

John M. Wells was born in 1903, the son of J. Cheney Wells of the American Optical Company and Florence Morse. He married Sylvia Shippen in 1928. Working first for American Optical Company for a number of years, Wells formed a company, Harvey-Wells Communications, Incorporated in 1940 (with headquarters in Southbridge) in order to work in his preferred field, radio-communications.

Built on part of Cohasset Farm, this house represents an early stage in the transition of this section of Eastford Road from rural to suburban. On Cohasset Farm, Cohasset Country Club was built in 1919, this house in 1927, and George Wells' house in 1932. During the 1940's the Jacobs Farm, on Durfee Road, was also subdivided for suburban houses. In more recent years further development of the areas around Elm Street and Durfee Road have created a much less rural feeling in the neighborhood. However, this house and the areas immediately around it are still undeveloped and relatively unchanged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases

Wells, Ruth D. The Wells Family, Southbridge, privately printed, 1979, pp. 213-218.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Southbridge MRA
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

- | Nomination/Type of Review | Date/Signature |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 71. Tapin, Eugene, House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 72. Tiffany--Leonard House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 73. Twinehurst American Optical Company Neighborhood | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 74. Upper Chapin Street Historic District | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 75. Vinton--Boardman Farmhouse | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 76. Vinton--Torrey House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 77. Wells, George B. and Ruth D., House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 78. Wells, H.C., Double House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 79. Wells, John M., House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |
| 80. Wheeler, Albert H., House | Entered in the National Register <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeper <u>Melores Byers 6/22/89</u>
Attest _____ |

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Wells, John M., House

MULTIPLE NAME: Southbridge MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000553

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 6/22/89 DATE Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTMs boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____

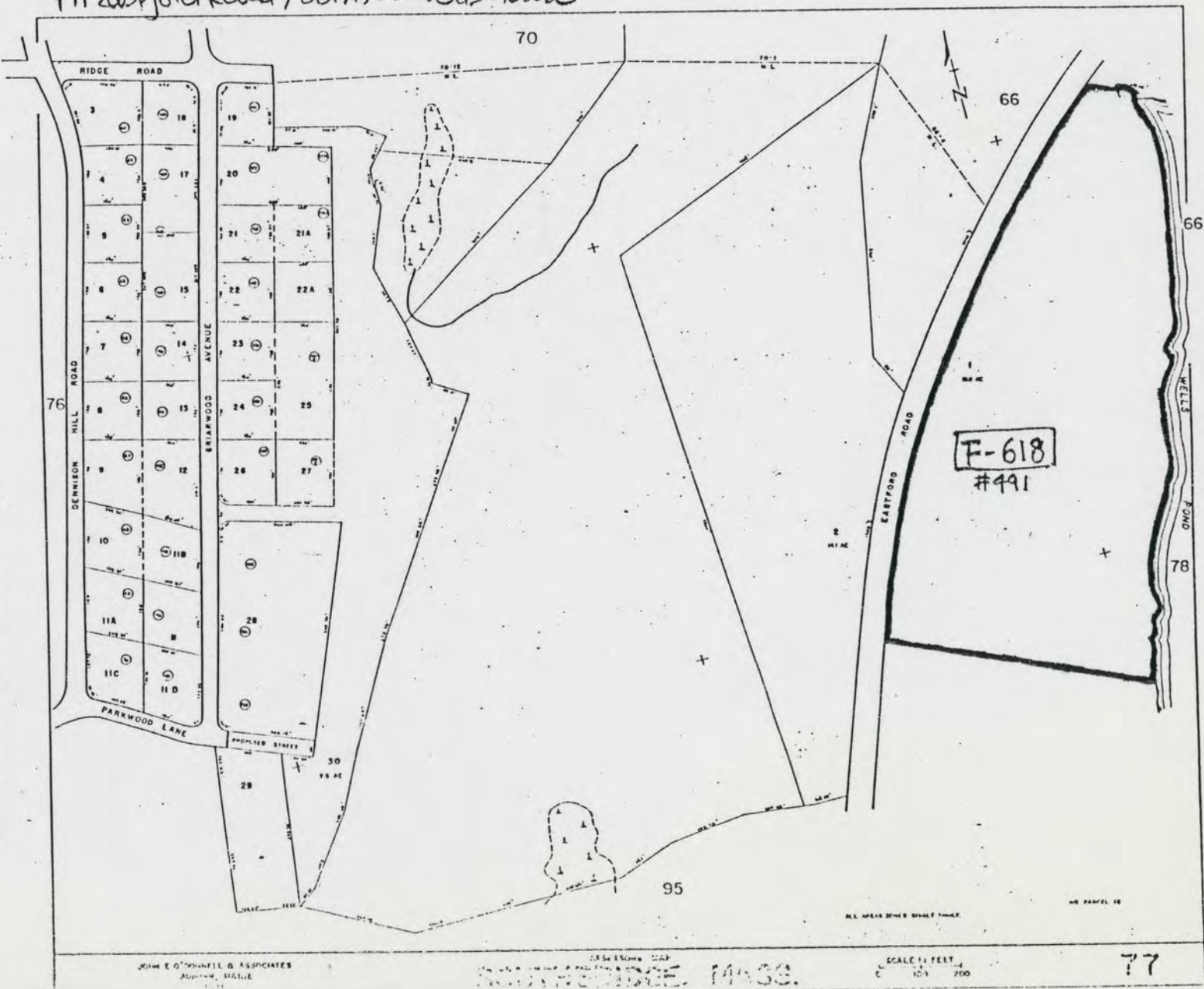
Date _____



John M. Wells House, (F. 618) 491 Eastford Rd.
Southbridge, MA *MRA*
Ceccacci, 1986
Southbridge Historical Commission
Roll #4

491 Eastford Road, John M. Wells House

SOUTHERIDGE MASS
MHA



F-618
#491

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294