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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pillsbury Summer House

other names/site number Helen Pillsbury House

2. Location

street & number 45 Old Cove Road n/a not for publication

city or town Duxbury n/a vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county Plymouth code 023 zip code 02232

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director 10/12/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Cara H. Metz
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain):

for
Signature of the Keeper

Edson Beall

Date of Action

11/27/04

Pillsbury Summer House
Name of Property

Plymouth, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)
Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	
	building
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Early Modern

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete block piers
walls Redwood shiplap and board and batten
roof Asphalt Shingle
other Brick chimneys

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Pillsbury Summer House
Duxbury (Plymouth), MA

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7. DESCRIPTION

Built in 1938, the Pillsbury Summer House is an early example of a house designed according to the principals of the modern movement. The house stands at 45 Old Cove Road in the northeast quadrant of Duxbury, a town located 30 miles south of Boston in a coastal region of Massachusetts known as the South Shore. Facing south, the house is sited on a secluded three-acre lot that extends to Duck Hill River and the vast Duxbury Marsh on the north. Unpretentious and characterized by simple finishes and numerous outdoor spaces, the house is a long, one-room deep, 2-story rectangle set parallel to the river and perpendicular to its garage, to which it is connected by a breezeway and overhead trellis (photo 1). The breezeway and garage screen about 2/3 of the house from view, breaking up the longitudinal massing and dividing the lot into public and private spaces. The living room is oriented toward a private terrace on the south (photo 2). The north elevation faces the river, views of which can be enjoyed from a screened porch, the living room, and dining room. Along with its distinctly early modern features, the house incorporates a gable roof, double-hung sash and a center chimney, reflecting New England's traditional architecture but with a contemporary spin.

Old Cove Road is a narrow automobile lane that connects Powder Point Avenue on the south to Cove Street on the west (see assessors map). It is a serpentine roadway that winds through woodland. The access drive to 45 Old Cove Road is located at the point where the street curves sharply to the west. Naturalistically landscaped and unpaved, it runs north off Old Cove Road, terminating near the junction of the house and garage where it encircles an American Hornbeam tree. Set back perhaps 200 feet from Old Cove Road and approximately 60 feet from the high water mark of the Back River, the house is screened by trees and shrubs as well as dense vegetation along the shore, allowing it to blend into its environment.

Exterior

Framed of Ponderosa pine and enclosed by a side-gabled roof, the house is composed of a two-story main block with a lower 2 story service wing that steps down to a one-story back porch extending to the east. A one story, one-room wing topped by a deck extends to the west from the main block, and a one story porch, screened on three sides, extends to the north from the west wing. Set end to end, the principal sections of the house total about eighty-six linear feet. A fenced service yard at the east end extends the house visually another ten feet.

A breezeway leads from the east end of the main block to the garage (photos 1 and 2), separating the entrance from a private terrace, and sheltering the main entry, which contains a simple wood framed door with four horizontal glazed panels over a single wood panel all covered by a screen door with one long screened panel over a single horizontal

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Duxbury (Plymouth), MA**

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wood panel. Large areas of glazing, divided into horizontal panes for both doors and windows, are a major character-defining feature of the house. Most of the custom windows contain double-hung sash with 4/4 horizontal lights in simple wooden frames. Typically windows are arranged in pairs or grouped. The south (principal) elevation of the two-story main block, which faces the terrace (photo 2), is defined by a group of four glazed 12-light doors that fold into the living room to open it completely to the terrace. The four doors are echoed at the second story by a group of four windows. To the right of those four windows is another group of three (matched below). The close grouping of the seven second-story windows calls to mind the strip windows that became a characteristic feature of modern architecture. The south-facing strip windows at the first and second floors are joined by a west-facing window on the ground floor and double doors to the second floor porch that effectively open the corner to light and the prevailing southwest breeze. Corner windows are another character-defining feature of modern architecture. On the north elevation, floor to ceiling paired multi-light windows with fixed sash are set beside a similar double-hung sash. This group of large windows, which primarily light the dining room, is directly opposite the front door providing views of the river from the entrance.

One brick chimney rises through the center of the main block, and another rises through the ridge of the garage at the north end. The house is clad with horizontal shiplap at the first story and vertical board and batten at the second. The change from horizontal to vertical siding serves to break up the long rectangular mass and is a contemporary use of two traditional types of sheathing. Other notable architectural details include overhanging eaves with open rafters and a one story tall fence/gate unit of vertical and horizontal louvered panels that forms the west wall of the breezeway, screening the main entrance from the terrace. Designed for summer use, the house is not insulated and does not have central heat. It rests on concrete block piers covered with fiberboard.

The two-car, 1½ story, front-gabled garage has a small lean-to on the east, giving it a traditional salt-box roof line, but with a contemporary twist in that the saltbox profile is the facade rather than a side elevation. Openings consist of two sets of paired, vertical board, barn-style vehicular doors with iron hardware, a pedestrian door at the east end, and a triple window in the gable end. An open stairway, screened from the driveway view by vertical boards, rises up the west elevation to a landing at the entrance to living space in the attic. A solar collector (ca. 1980) projects above the garage doors and provides hot water to the attic room.

The board and batten and shiplap siding on the house and garage is redwood, chosen because it is durable and was readily available at the time of construction. It has recently been painted a light gray-green, a close match to the original color but perhaps a bit more saturated, according to the owner. Window and door trim is white with the exception of red storm/screen doors at the main entrance and on the north elevation.

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Duxbury (Plymouth), MA**

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Interior

The house contains a living room, dining room, kitchen, six bedrooms and four bathrooms, plus two screened porches and two second floor decks. An additional bedroom and bath are located in the attic above the garage. A small cellar at the east end of the house provides access to the water shut-off. Rooms are arranged in linear fashion to maximize views, light and cross ventilation (see floor plan). A notable feature of the floor plan is the absence of space-consuming hallways. Interior finishes are designed to be simple, unpretentious, and functional. Walls in the principal rooms are finished with rough-sawn tongue and groove boards laid horizontally on the ground floor and vertically on the second floor, echoing the exterior cladding. In two of the second floor bedrooms the wall surface is unfinished, but most rooms are painted white or light green (living room and dining room). The wall between the living room and dining room is mostly painted brick due to the chimney and fireplaces on both sides of the wall. The painted brick surface of the chimney is incorporated into the wall of the bedroom above. Utilitarian and single-bed rooms have exposed wall framing. Ceilings generally feature exposed joists, but those in the living room and dining room are finished with flush boards painted white. Floors are hard Southern pine throughout. Batten doors with simple casings and iron thumb-latch hardware lead into the rooms, a number of which feature built-in furniture, typically made of birch. Wall-mounted light fixtures, some designed by Eleanor Raymond, are typically metal boxes fitted with translucent panels.

The living room, dining room, and entrance hall form the core of the first floor. In the living room (photo 3), a painted brick fireplace with Heatilator is flanked by simple shelves and cabinets along the east wall. The north wall features a built-in sofa incorporating an end table/storage/record player at one end. The dining room (photo 4) features a fireplace in its southwest corner, a built-in sideboard and shelving on the west wall, and a pair of louvered doors dividing it from the entry hall. A butler's pantry leads from the dining room to a large kitchen. Both are lined with open upper shelving, lower cabinets, and birch countertops fitted with sinks. Two utility rooms off the kitchen lead to a screened porch and fenced service area at the east end of the house. The guest bedroom at the west end features a built-in dresser and an extra-wide doorway that can accommodate a wheelchair. A small hall provides access to the bedroom, a bathroom, and the screened porch on the north elevation.

The staircase to the second floor begins at a landing two steps up from the main entrance hall. Three horizontal rails visible in the entry hall give way to a simple handrail along the enclosed portion of the stairway. On the second floor, a hallway with two small double bedrooms on the south side and a bathroom and linen closet on the north leads to the master bedroom suite. The latter, which overlooks the terrace on the south (photo 2), includes a dressing room and bathroom as well as a large deck accessed by double doors on the west elevation. Another deck over the breezeway

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leads from a bedroom to the room over the garage. Two single bedrooms and a bath are at the east end of the house in the service wing. All of the bedrooms are protected from the north wind, which can be severe, by the small spaces and closets on the north side. The attic over the garage contains living space that was designed as a recreation/play room with open studs and rafters. In 1980, a bathroom and kitchenette, as well as insulation and interior rough sawn wall boards were added to convert the space to a studio apartment that could be occupied well into the fall. In addition, a solar collector was placed above the garage doors on the south elevation to provide hot water to the studio. The north wall of the studio has its original unpainted brick fireplace with Heatilator that circulates the warmed air back into the room.

Alterations

The well-preserved house has experienced only a few alterations. Those that are visible from the exterior include the addition of the solar collector (1980) and the replacement of a portion of the large north-facing dining room window (1992). The original configuration was one ten-foot long fixed multi-light window beside an operable double hung window. A major storm damaged the fixed sash, which was replaced with two fixed sash divided by a stud to create added support. A recent alteration is the replacement of the deteriorated red cedar shingle roof with GAF Timberline ultra lifetime asphalt shingles (2002). On the interior of the main block, the only substantive change is the widening of the doors in the first floor guest room, bathroom and adjoining hall to accommodate a wheelchair (1971). A wood ramp (recently replaced) leading to the front door was also added in 1971.

Landscaping

Although there are planting beds near the house, generally, the grounds are not cultivated, being characterized by a natural woodland landscape with trails leading to the house and down to the river. Among the many mature trees on the property are two particularly fine giant beech, several large birch, and a number of towering white pines. Some of the plants near the house that were added by the family include hosta, dogwood, viburnum, and an espaliered pear tree that climbs over the trellis at the entrance. The landscape has evolved over time, with some of the pines having died out and the birch becoming quite large. The circular planting area created by the driveway around the American Hornbeam tree in front of the house was originally filled with various scrubs and natural plants that have died out as the tree grew to shade the area.

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Furnishings

The house retains its original furniture as well as objects added over time by Mrs. Helen Pillsbury, who used it as a summer residence for forty years. All of the furniture reflects the modern aesthetic of the 1930s and 40s, and some of the pieces were designed by Alvar Alto, one of the master architects of the modern movement. Most of the living room furniture is made of rattan. The dining room features a table designed for the house using plywood, which was then a new and technologically exciting material embraced by modernists. Bedrooms contain simple twin beds, some of which were custom built. Beige floor to ceiling drapes in the living room and yellow drapes in the dining room are drawn when the weather turns cold.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are currently identified on the nominated property, sites may be present. Nine sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). One site, the Powder Point Site (19-PL-341), includes the entire peninsula known by that name immediately east of the Pillsbury House. The site was identified on the basis of artifact collections from that area dating back to the 1880s. Occupations dating from the Middle Archaic through Late Woodland periods have been identified from that area. Environmental characteristics of the property indicate locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of ancient Native American sites. Much of the property and the area includes level to moderately sloped coastal landforms composed of well drained soils formed in glacial outwash deposits. The house is located within 400 feet of the Back River that drains to Duxbury Bay. The area is located within the South Coastal Shore drainage region. Given the above information, the size of the property (3.2 acres), and limited landscaping and construction on the lot, a high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the Pillsbury Summer House property.

A low potential exists for the recovery of significant historic archaeological resources on the nominated property. While Duxbury was settled early in the 17th Century, dispersed farmsteads characterized much of the town until the late 19th Century when coastal areas were divided for a growing seasonal resort use that developed into a commuter suburb in the mid-twentieth century. Some maritime use was also present in the town; however, none has been identified in the area. In fact, no historic land use has been identified prior to construction of the Pillsbury House. Limited agricultural use of the area may be characteristic of most land use on the property prior to 1938.

Archaeology statement

(end)

Pillsbury Summer House

Name of Property

Plymouth, MA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1938 to 1954

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Eleanor Raymond and Sarah P. Harkness (architects)

James W. Douglas & Son (building contractor)

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

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8. Statement of Significance

The Pillsbury house at 45 Old Cove Road is significant as a rare and pioneering example of modern architecture and as the first building designed by Sarah Pillsbury Harkness (b. 1914), a founder of The Architects Collaborative (TAC). Harkness, who now owns the house, designed it in 1938 in collaboration with and under the tutelage of the noted modern architect, Eleanor Raymond, who is the architect of record for the house. Built as a summer residence for Harkness's parents, the house is in mint condition both inside and out. It is the only documented example of modern architecture in Duxbury, a community that is defined by its Colonial, Federal, and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Because modern houses are rare in general, and because of the prominence of its architects, the house is also significant on a statewide level. In addition, since most known early modern houses were built as permanent residences, the house at 45 Old Cove Road is a rare example of an early modern house designed for seasonal occupancy.

Principles of the modern movement in architecture that are expressed in the house include its emphasis on regularity rather than symmetry, absence of extraneous ornament, colors reflecting nature, rows of windows, built in furniture, expansive openings that blur the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces, and using traditional elements in a new way, for example combining shiplap with board and batten siding or the use of multi-light sash with horizontal rather than vertical panes. A major character-defining feature is the emphasis on horizontal lines as seen in the window muntins, stair and deck railings, trellis, and interior wall surfaces. The house was designed and painted gray-green to blend into the natural landscape while taking advantages of views and disturbing the land as little as possible, concepts that were central to the modern movement and that reflect Harkness's training in landscape architecture as well as her mother's love of the natural environment. The house at 45 Old Cove Road retains integrity of design, location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association; and fulfills National Register criteria A and C at the state and local levels.

Settled in 1628 and incorporated in 1637, Duxbury began as a farming community that claimed legendary Pilgrims William Brewster, Myles Standish, and John Alden among its first settlers. For over 100 years the town was characterized by dispersed farmsteads, but given the coastal location, water transportation was a constant feature of town life. Small shipyards emerged to meet the needs of locals, but after the American Revolution, shipbuilding developed in earnest, and the Duxbury economy was driven by it for some seventy years. Coastal areas in the vicinity of shipyards became densely settled villages. Washington Street, laid out in 1798 parallel to the bay, was quickly lined with Federal houses built by sea captains and shipbuilders. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Old Shipbuilder's Historic District, it remains Duxbury's most historically significant residential street. After the

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decline of shipbuilding in the mid-19th century, the economy stagnated and the town experienced almost no development until the railroad arrived in 1871. Enterprising businessmen, recognizing the virtues of the Duxbury coastline, seized the opportunity to transform the town into a haven for summer people. From the 1870s to the 1960s, subdivision of coastal lands and the building of seasonal houses was the primary real estate development activity in town. In the 1960s, when a limited access highway (Route 3) was extended southward, Duxbury began its transition to the commuter suburb of Boston that it remains today.

Duxbury's earliest summer houses were modest variations on the Victorian Eclectic, Queen Anne, and Shingle-styles popular in the late-19th century. In the early 20th century, with the rise of the preservation movement and its close cousin, the Colonial Revival movement, Duxbury's rich supply of 18th and early 19th century capes and sea captains' houses became sought after for restoration as summer homes. Builders of new houses typically copied the designs of the past, a Colonial Revival aesthetic that continues to the present day. Throughout its history, Duxbury architecture has been modest and stylistically conservative. As new styles were introduced in the 19th century, they were slow to appear in Duxbury, and such advances as the center hall plan of the mid-18th century did not make an appearance in Duxbury until the early 19th century. To this day, the center chimney remains a character-defining feature of Duxbury's residential architecture.

In this context, the early modern Pillsbury Summer House was particularly ground-breaking. But, not only was modern architecture revolutionary in Duxbury, it was also just beginning in this country. In the late-1930s when Harkness and Raymond designed the Pillsbury house, Cambridge, Massachusetts was poised to become the national hub of modern architecture. This was due to the arrival of Walter Gropius, who emigrated from Europe in 1937 to become Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Gropius, a founder of the modern movement, a preeminent practitioner of modern architecture, and a revered teacher of the modernist philosophy, had founded a school of architecture known as the Bauhaus in Germany in 1919. One of the underlying philosophies of the Bauhaus and the modern movement was a concept known as "functionalism."

Sarah P. Harkness explains this concept as it applies to 45 Old Cove Road in the following text that she wrote for this nomination: "What the Pillsbury House principally shares with the modern movement is 'functionalism' -- functionalism in all its forms-- planning, relation to the site, orientation to the sun and wind and interpretation of the client's needs. Design depends on form and materials rather than style or decoration. The Gropius House in Lincoln, MA [NR-1988; NHL-2000] was built in the same year as the Pillsbury House in Duxbury. The flat roof, steel windows and cubic form of the Gropius House contrast with the pitched roofs, double-hung sash windows and spread-out plan of the house in Duxbury. The Gropius House has an industrial character while the Pillsbury House draws

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inspiration from New England barns. Both houses, however, incorporate the modernist approach of functionalism taught by Gropius." The following quote from an article on the house published in Architectural Forum (1941) captures the essence of functionalism as expressed in the Pillsbury House:

It is not often realized that the summer house has special potentialities of its own, that even in the northern States the factor of seasonal use permits a kind of planning quite different from that required for a year-round residence. In this house, for instance, the long narrow shape, excellent for light and ventilation, imposes no extra expense for insulation, weatherstripping and double glazing. Similarly, the big opening in the living room is very simply taken care of, since protection against winter weather need not be considered. It will be noted that the playroom over the garage is entirely isolated, and can be reached only by going out of doors. The plan, very conveniently arranged and well oriented, has an especially good feature in the downstairs bedroom and adjoining porch; the latter is easily reached from the living room, is open on three sides, and yet takes light from none of the rooms.

Sarah Pillsbury Harkness and Eleanor Raymond designed the house at 45 Old Cove Road when Harkness (then Miss Pillsbury) was a third year student at the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (The Cambridge School; 53 Church Street, Cambridge; NHL 1991). Established in 1916, when few architecture schools admitted women, The Cambridge School was the first for women architects. In the late-1930s, the school was absorbed by Smith College, but it closed in 1942 when women were admitted to Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Harkness's father, Samuel H. Pillsbury, purchased the land in Duxbury with the hope that his daughter would design the family a summer house. Harkness discussed the project with Henry Atherton Frost, founder and head of The Cambridge School, who suggested she work with his former partner Eleanor Raymond, and use the project as a practicum or internship. Harkness went to work in Raymond's office at 126 Newbury Street in Boston, where the two designed the house, with Harkness serving as associate architect.

Eleanor Raymond (1887-1989) was among the first women to study architecture at The Cambridge School, where she later taught. After graduation in 1919, she practiced architecture with Henry Atherton Frost, opening an independent practice concentrating on domestic architecture in 1928. Her early designs were in the Colonial Revival style, but after visiting the Bauhaus in 1929, she embraced the principals of the modern movement. When she returned she designed a house for her sister that is believed to be the first (1931) modern house in New England. It stands at 12 Park Avenue in Belmont (MHC #238). Another of her houses, which bears some similarity to 45 Old Cove Road, stands at 15 Longfellow Park in Cambridge (The Frost House, 1935). She also designed an early (1948) solar house at 49 Powissett Street in Dover (MHC #110) for MIT professor, Maria Telkes, a pioneer in the field of solar heating. In 1961, Raymond was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

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Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, born in Swampscott (MA) in 1914, received her Master's degree in Architecture in 1939 from Smith College. Collaborative design, beginning with the Pillsbury Summer house, was the central theme of Mrs. Harkness's career. In 1945, she and her husband, John (Chip) Harkness and four other young architects invited Walter Gropius to join them in forming The Architects Collaborative. TAC, which existed until the late 1990s, and with which Harkness remained associated throughout her career and while raising seven children, became a premier architecture firm with an international reputation. Primarily known for her institutional work with TAC, Mrs. Harkness also collaborated on various domestic projects, including Six Moon Hill in Lexington, where she and her husband designed their principal residence (MHC #536). In collaboration with other TAC principals, Mrs. Harkness's important commissions include the Library and the Olin Arts Center at Bates College (Lewiston, ME), the Anita Tuvin Schlechter Auditorium at Dickinson College (Carlisle, PA), the Fox Lane Middle School (Bedford, NY), the Art School Addition at the Worcester Art Museum (MA), and the C. Thurston Chase Learning Center of the Eaglebrook School in Deerfield (MA).

Mrs. Harkness served as New England Regional Director of the American Institute of Architects (1974-1976), Vice President of the American Institute of Architects (1978), and president of the Boston Society of Architects (1985). She was elected a fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1979. Her only other work in Duxbury is an addition at 16 Crooked Lane on Powder Point. Designed to complement that important Stick-style house, it does not use the modern vocabulary, leaving the Old Cove Road house a rare example of her domestic work.

In a recent interview, Harkness stated that she was responsible for the site planning, massing matters and general layout of the house while Raymond's influence can be seen in the use of horizontal shiplap cladding on the first story and the vertical board and batten on the second story as well as in the design of the breezeway's louvered wall. Ms. Raymond designed the horizontal-paned windows and influenced the choice of interior finishes, furnishings and fixtures. Harkness's mother, Helen Pillsbury, also played a collaborative role in the design. She requested the pitched roof, a feature that is unusual in modern architecture where the flat roof is characteristic. Mrs. Pillsbury was also responsible for the finished walls and ceilings and the painted surfaces in the principal rooms. Harkness leaned toward open framing, such as that in the service wing.

According to Harkness, the siting of the house was influenced by the existing landscape, especially by four large pine trees that grew in a row on the north side of the house. Only one of those pines remains, but a number of graceful birch trees have become a dominant feature along the north elevation. Among the things that attracted the Pillsburys to the property was the abundance of trees. Mr. Pillsbury was so taken with the land that he hired Delano and Keith, civil engineers, to prepare a contour map of the site. That 1937 site plan, which now hangs in the entry hall, records the

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location of every tree on the property including white pines, birch, mountain ash, oak, red cedar, wild cherry, beech and rows of spruce. After the house was constructed, the landscape evolved to its present appearance, greatly influenced by Mrs. Pillsbury, who valued an informal, natural setting.

Prior to purchasing the land at 45 Old Cove Road, the Pillsburys had rented summer houses in Duxbury for a number of years. Among them was the 1808 King Caesar House at 120 King Caesar Road (MHC #28; NR - 1978). One of Duxbury's most significant Federal period houses, it was built by Duxbury's premier shipbuilding magnate, Ezra Weston II, known as King Caesar, as was his father. The Pillsburys had the opportunity to buy the King Caesar house, which is now a house museum owned by the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, but decided to build a modern house instead. The decision was likely influenced by the fact that their daughter was an architecture student as well as the fact that the land they purchased became available at the right time. The land was part of a 1937 subdivision of a large parcel owned by H.F and E.R Day. The ten-lot subdivision extended from Powder Point Avenue to Duxbury's Old Cove, which is formed by a bend in the Duck Hill River. The Pillsburys purchased three of the four lots with river frontage (lots six, seven and eight), which are shown on the subdivision plan covered with trees and labeled "Beech Grove." A row of ten bath houses associated with the Town Landing to the northwest stood along the river. To the dismay of Mrs. Pillsbury, the bath houses were removed by the seller just prior to conveying title.

The building contract for the house and garage was drawn on April 9, 1938 between Helen W. Pillsbury and contractor James W. Douglas & Son, Inc. of Hull, MA,. The contract, prepared by Eleanor Raymond and Sarah Pillsbury, called for the work to be substantially completed by July 15, 1938 at a cost of \$16,065 and according to specifications and drawings dated March 1938.

Although the house was designed as a summer residence for Samuel and Helen Pillsbury, Mr. Pillsbury died on May 19, 1938, a few months before the house was completed. Born on December 29, 1873, Samuel Hale Pillsbury graduated from Harvard with a law degree in 1897, having served as an editor of two Harvard newspapers -- the Lampoon and Crimson. In 1919, Mr. Pillsbury, a trial lawyer, formed the law firm of Pillsbury, Dana and Young, which is still in existence as Bingham, Dana and Gould. In 1912, he married Helen Farrington Watters (1886-1978) and proceeded to have three children -- Samuel, Sarah, and Frederick. The family's principal residence was at 173 Adams Street in Milton, MA, which was the birthplace of U.S. President George Herbert Walker Bush.

Mrs. Pillsbury, who lived to be ninety-two, summered in the house for some forty years, gathering her family, which eventually included fourteen grandchildren. The two single rooms at the east end of the house were occupied by her live-in helper. An avid gardener, Mrs. Pillsbury was a member of the Duxbury and Milton garden clubs, and is remembered for the creative arrangements of marsh grasses and other natural vegetation that graced the house during

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Pillsbury Summer House
Duxbury (Plymouth), MA**

Section number 8 Page 6

her ownership. Her artistic sensibility is also reflected in the furnishings and in her choice of artwork, some of which takes the form of posters brought back from her many trips to Europe. Rather than framing the posters, she simply tacked them up on the walls, a nod to the functionalism of the house. Another theme of the artwork she displayed is that much of it was created by talented family members and friends.

Frederick Pillsbury, a journalist and the youngest of the Pillsbury children spent summers at 45 Old Cove Road with his parents, and continued to summer there with his wife, Mary (Bina) and their three children. Activities included Ping-Pong in the rec-room above the garage, swimming and canoeing on the Duck Hill River, as well as sail racing and tennis at the Duxbury Yacht Club, which was a central feature of the family's summer life. Then and now, summer days conclude on the screened porch, which is the family's favorite summer gathering place. Upon Mrs. Pillsbury's death, her three children inherited the house. The two brothers transferred their interest to Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, who still owns the house and occupies it with her family as a summer residence. Both the exterior and interior of the house including the furnishings, paintings, and various collections remain primarily as they were in Mrs. Pillsbury's lifetime, so that the house continues to reflect her taste and her spirit.

Archaeological Significance

While numerous ancient Native American sites have been recorded in the Duxbury area, few have been systematically or intensively studied, limiting their level of interpretation. Many sites remain undocumented with locational information only. Collections research has contributed some information relating to cultural chronologies, tool technologies, and site type/function based on inferences from artifact tool types and location; however, these collections may reflect collector bias for locations and materials and usually lack intrasite provenance. Professional archaeological surveys and excavations conducted over the last 25 years as part of cultural resource management studies have contributed additional information; however, among over 2,000 such studies conducted statewide in Massachusetts, only two were in Kingston. Given the above information, patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Duxbury remain poorly documented. Any surviving sites on the property or in the town have the potential to contribute valuable information relating to the town's Native American history. Native sites located on the Pillsbury House property may contain information that documents the growth of settlement in the South Shore Coastal locale and the role it played in the development of a regional Native American settlement core that evolved in that area. Information may exist that documents the reasons why a core developed in this area, possibly as a function of sea level rise and the floral and faunal resources that developed in upland and marine related ecosystems. Information may exist that documents the distribution of site types and functions within this area and how that distribution changed through time. Information may exist that documents the importance of this area to Native and ultimately European populations during the early historic or Contact period.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Pillsbury Summer House
Duxbury (Plymouth), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cole, Doris. Eleanor Raymond, Architect. East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Press. 1981.

_____. From Tipi to Skyscraper: A History of Women in Architecture. Boston: I press inc. 1973. pp. 87-93
(photo of 45 Old Cove Road on p. 93)

Davis, Karen L. "Duxbury Communitywide Survey, Phases 1 and 2". Final Reports. 2001 and 2002. (on file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission).

Grady, Anne. "National Historic Landmark Nomination: Gropius House." February 8, 2000. (available at the Massachusetts Historical Commission).

"House in Duxbury, Mass. Eleanor Raymond, Architect; Sarah Pillsbury, Associate." The Architectural Forum. December 1941. pp. 402-403. (includes a floor plan)

International Archive of Women in Architecture. Sarah Pillsbury Harkness Papers, 1985-1997. Special Collections Department, University Library, Virginia Tech. (The IAWA has a website with information about the Harkness Papers and a brief biography of Harkness.)

Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms: Blm.238, Dov.110, Dux. 520.

Massachusetts Historical Commission maker index.

Pillsbury, Katherine, Robert Hale and Jack Post, eds. The Duxbury Book, 1637-1987. Duxbury, MA: Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, 1987.

Pillsbury, Katherine H. Duxbury: A Guide. Duxbury, MA: Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, 1999.

Topolski, Jill S. National Historic Landmark nomination for Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 1991. (On file at the MHC)

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Pillsbury Summer House
Duxbury (Plymouth), MA**

Section number 9 Page 2

Wentworth, Dorothy. Settlement and Growth of Duxbury, 1628-1870. Duxbury, MA: DRHS, 1981.

Winsor, Justin. History of the Town of Duxbury. Boston: Crosby and Nichols, 1849.

Primary Sources

Building Contract. April 9, 1938. (in possession of Sarah P. Harkness).

Duxbury assessors files. 2001.

Historic photographs taken by Samuel Robbins of Attleboro, MA. ca. 1938.

Historic photographs taken by Sarah Pillsbury. Ca. 1939.

Interviews with Sarah P. Harkness, Frederick and Bina Pillsbury, and Sarah Harkness Super. 2001-2002.

Resume of Sarah P. Harkness. 1996.

Maps and Plans

Duxbury assessors maps: 1944 and current.

L.J. Richards Co. Atlas. Duxbury featured on plates 11 and 12. 1903. (Available at the Duxbury Free Library.)

Subdivision Plan of Land of H.F. and E.R. Day, Duxbury Massachusetts. Franklin Brett, Landscape Architect (Duxbury) and Delano and Keith, Civil Engineers (Plymouth). June 1937.

Original Plans for 45 Old Cove Road drawn by Sarah Pillsbury and dated March and August 1937. (Originals in possession of Sarah Pillsbury Harkness. Copies on file at the MHC).

Site plan. Ca. 1938. (Original in possession of Sarah P. Harkness. Copy on file at MHC.)

(end)

Pillsbury Summer House
Name of Property

Plymouth, MA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 361740 4656580
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

Duxbury Quad

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

— See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen L. Davis, Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date October 2004

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Sarah P. Harkness

street & number 34 Moon Hill Road telephone 781-862-2078

city or town Lexington state MA zip code 02421

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503. NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Pillsbury Summer House
Duxbury (Plymouth), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The house stands in Duxbury on parcel 180-063-006 of the current Duxbury assessors map.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the house.

(end)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Joan Harkness Hantz, August 2002

Negatives located: with photographer

1. Looking W at façade (right) and garage (left)
2. Looking N at south elevation (living room)
3. Interior: living room, looking E
4. Interior: dining room, looking NW

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Pillsbury Summer House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Plymouth

DATE RECEIVED: 10/14/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/19/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/04/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/27/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04001257

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 11/27/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Photo 1

45 OLD Cove Road, Duxbury, MA

Plymouth Co., Massachusetts

Photographer: Joan Harkness Hantz

Date: August 2002

Negatives with the photographer

View: Looking west at facade^(2 1/2); garage (L)

Photographer
JOAN HARKNESS HANTZ



Photo 2

45 OLD Cove Road, Duxbury
Plymouth Co., Massachusetts

Photographer: Joan Harkness Hantz

Date of Photo: Aug. 2002

Location of negative: with photographer

View: Looking North at South elevation (living room)

Photographer
JOAN HARKNESS HANTZ



Photo 3

45 Old Cove Road, Duxbury
Plymouth Co., Massachusetts

Photographer: Joan Harkness Hantz

Date of Photo: August 2002

Location of Negative: with photographer

View: Living room, looking east

Photographer
JOAN HARKNESS HANTZ



Photo 4

45 OLD Cove Road, Duxbury

Plymouth Co., Massachusetts

Photographer: Joan Harkness Hantz

Date of Photo: August 2002

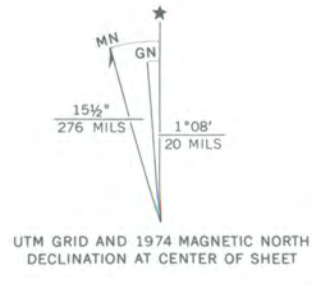
Location of Negative: with photographer

View: Dining room, looking Northwest.

Photographer
JOAN HARKNESS HANTZ



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1935-1936
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1973. Field checked 1974
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS 245 (1972) and 1208 (1973). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19



SCALE 1:25 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9.2 FEET
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

DUXBURY, MASS.
N4200—W7037.5/7.5
1974
AMS 6868 II SW—SERIES V814

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	500
6000	2000
5000	1500
4000	1000
3000	500
2000	2000
1000	500
500	200
200	50
100	20
0	0

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

45 Old Cove Rd.
Easting - 361740
Northing - 4656580

Pillsbury Summer House

* LOT AREA PER LOT
067-000 = 0.37 AC.

ROW
1008 ± ft (063-006)
2880 ± ft (063-009)
2160 ± ft (063-010)

25' ROW
9300 ± ft (066-004)
7000 ± ft (066-002)
7000 ± ft (066-001)

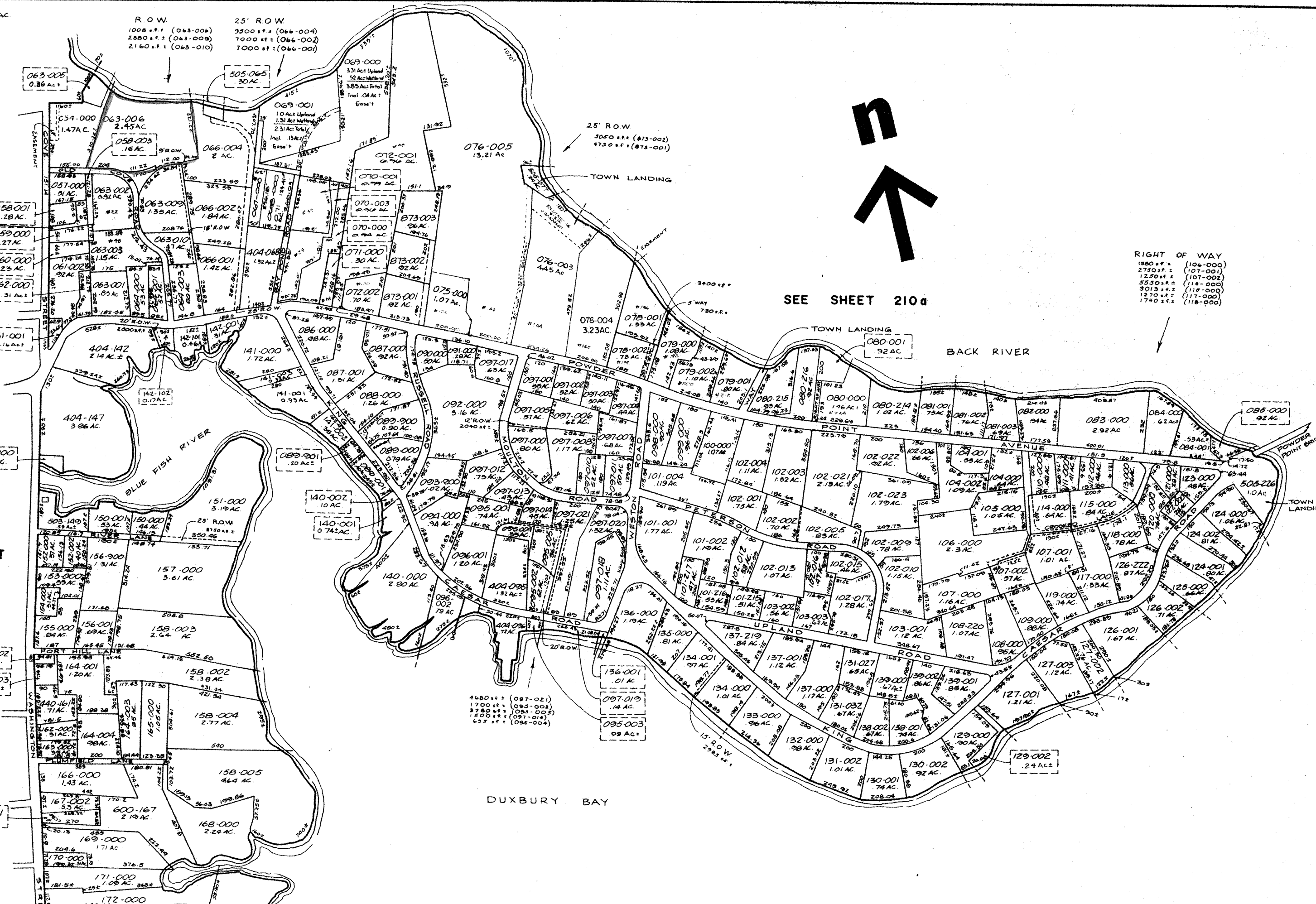


SEE SHEET 210d

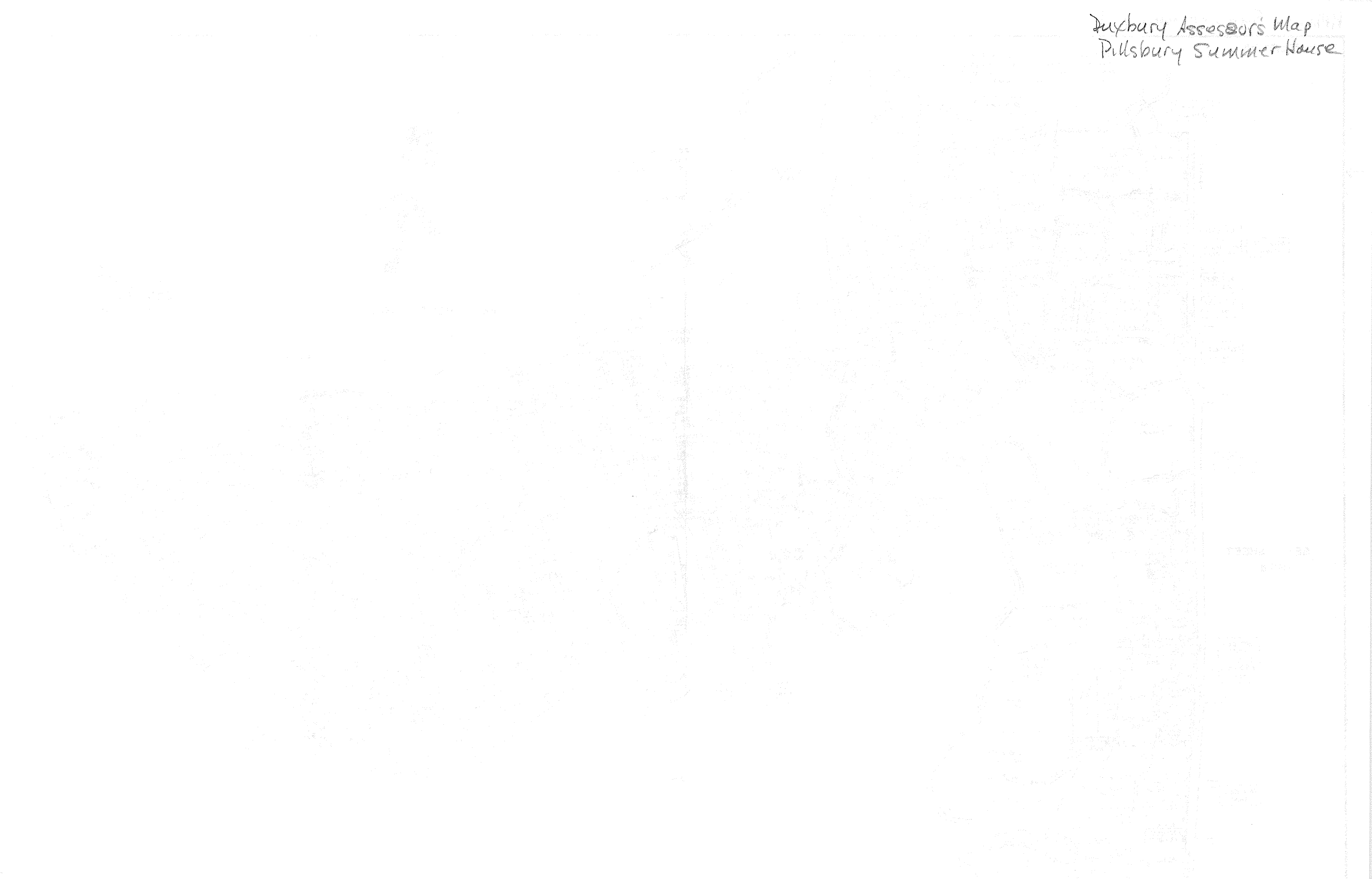
RIGHT OF WAY
1980 ± ft (104-000)
2750 ± ft (107-001)
1250 ± ft (107-002)
5550 ± ft (114-000)
3013 ± ft (115-000)
1270 ± ft (117-000)
1740 ± ft (118-000)

SEE SHEET
180d

DUXBURY BAY



Duxbury Assessors Map
Pillsbury Summer House





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 13, 2004

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Pillsbury Summer House, 45 Old Cove Rd., Duxbury (Plymouth), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Sarah Harkness
Karen L. Davis, consultant
Jody Hall and Martha Himes, Duxbury Historical Commission
Elizabeth Sullivan, Duxbury Board of Selectmen
Thomas Broadrick, Planning Director