

MAY 15 1989

526

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

| AREA | FORM NO. |
|------|----------|
| C | 323 |

Town Southbridge

Address 61 Chestnut Street

Historic Name Alpha M. Cheney House

Use: Present club house

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1885

Source maps, visual analysis

Style stick

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboards

Outbuildings (C) Victorian carriage

house of same period & design with cupola

Major Alterations (with dates) addition

between house & carriage house (late-20th c

Condition Good-fair

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage one acre

Setting treelined residential street with

some three-deckers

Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci
ed. S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Com-
mission

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

UTM REFERENCE 18/745 910/4661 730

USGS QUADRANGLE Southbridge, Mass-Conn.

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Alpha M. Cheney House and Carriage House is significant for its association with the town's late 19th century real estate development and its stylish Queen Anne 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.

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

This is one of the few intact high style examples of Victorian Gothic or Stick Style houses in Southbridge, although there are numerous vernacular interpretations. The projecting porch belvedere, one story bay windows, cross gables and peak-roofed tower give the house a picturesque silhouette, a quality which was very much admired throughout the mid to late-19th century. Victorian Gothic elements are seen in the picturesque silhouette, the half-timber treatment of the clapboard walls, the stick ornament in the gable aprons, the high pitched roofs and tall turret. The carriage house is of the same period and style as the house. With its picturesque look and a cupola on top, it is a very important complement to the house and is significant in its own right.

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

In 1870 this area was undeveloped. By 1878 Alpha M. Cheney had a house slightly further south and on the opposite side of the street from the present one. It was surrounded by twenty-three acres. The present house is believed to have been built about 1885. First seen on the 1898 atlas, this house did not stand alone on the street. Several smaller houses belonging to Cheney were already standing on the opposite side of the street. Although no documentation has been found to indicate who the occupants of those houses were, it seems likely that they were employees of the nearby American Optical Company with which Cheney was intimately related. During this same period George W. Wells, president of American Optical had begun to subdivide property belonging to his own Main Street house and building housing for employees. During the early-20th century Chestnut Street and other streets nearby were actively developed as housing for American Optical workers.

Alpha Morse Cheney (1834-1897) was born in Southbridge, the son of Deacon Marvin Cheney and Bertha Morse Cheney. He first married Sarah Cunningham who died in 1876. He had two children by that marriage. In 1882 he married Emma Bradford of Woodstock, Connecticut.

After attending Nichols Academy in Dudley, Cheney entered the spectacle factory in Southbridge as an apprentice at the age of seventeen. He later became a master of the trade. After working for what had become R.H. Cole & Company for several years, he acquired an interest in the business. When the American Optical Company was incorporated in 1869, he became one of the largest stockholders and retained that interest for the rest of his life.

(See Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases,

. Biographical Review. Boston: Biographical Review Publishing Co., 1899, p. 204.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------|
| Community: | MRA | Form No: |
| Southbridge | | C-323 |
| Property Name: | Alpha M. Cheney House 61 Chestnut Street | |

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

His industry and sound business judgement rewarded him with wealth and property. At the time of his death he was reported to have had a "large amount of property including one of the finest private residences in Southbridge." Cheney was a deacon of the Baptist Church and was active in fraternal organizations.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| 11. Building at 38--42 Worcester Street Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 12. Building at 52 Main Street Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 13. Central Mills Historic District Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 14. Chamberlain--Bordeau House Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 15. Chapin Block Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 16. Cheney, Alpha M. House Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 17. Cheney, J.M., Rental House Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 18. Clarke--Glover Farmhouse Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 19. Cliff Cottage Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |
| 20. Cole, E., Merritt, House Entered in the National Register | Keeper <u>Melrose Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____ |

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Cheney, Alpha 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: 89000526

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 _____



Alpha M. Cheney House, C. 323
Southbridge MA MRA
Ceccacci, 1986

Southbridge Historical
Commission

Roll #6

61 Chestnut St

(c) house



Cheney Carriagehouse, C-323
Southbridge MA MRT
Ceccacci, 1986
Southbridge Historical
Commission
Roll # 6

61 Chestnut St

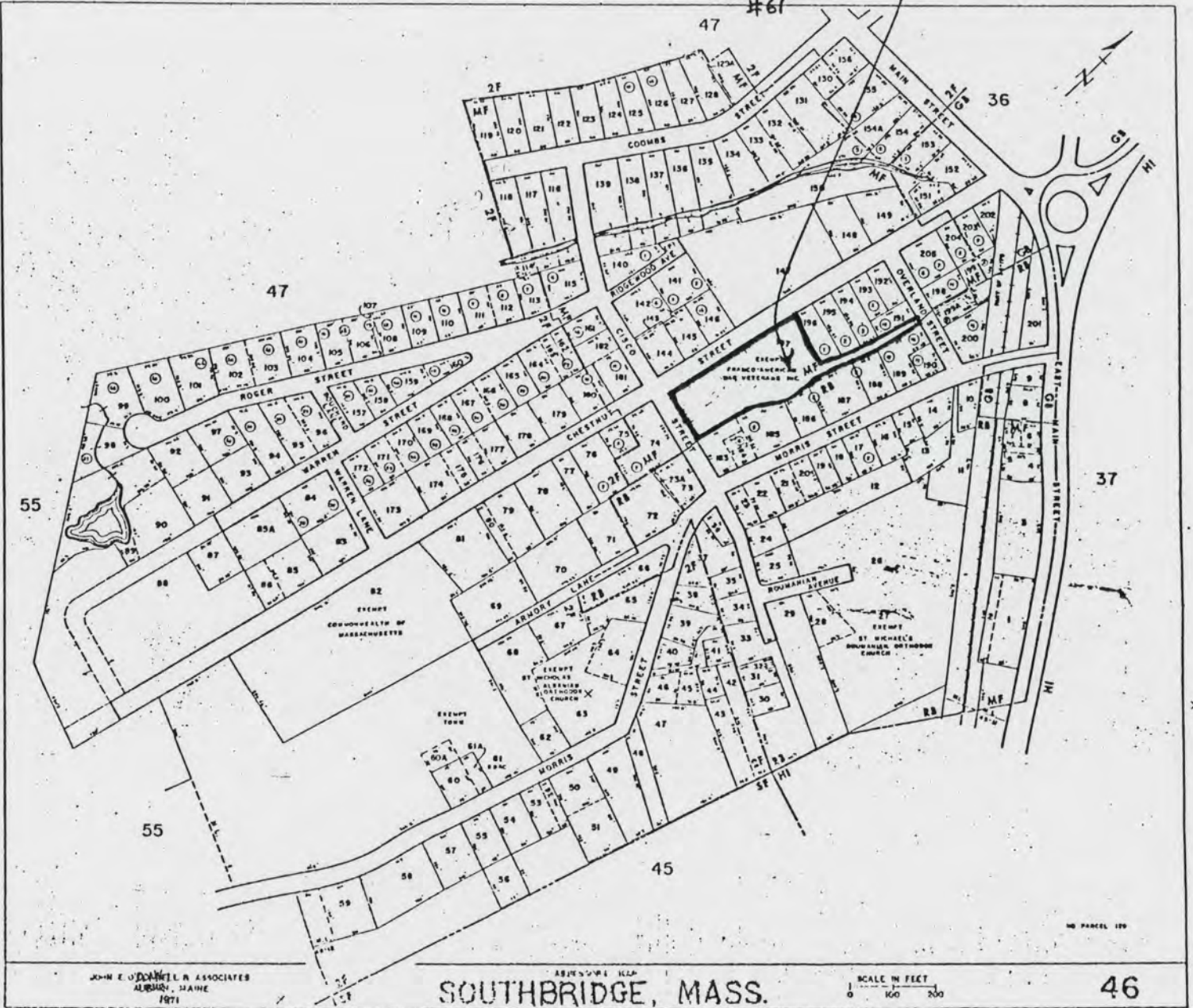
(c) Carriage hse.

part of P

Cheney, Alpha My House

C-323

#61



SOUTHBRIDGE MASS
MRA

JOHN E. O'DONNELL & ASSOCIATES
ALBANY, MAINE
1971

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.

SCALE IN FEET
0 100 200

46

61 Chestnut Street

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294