

MAY 15 1989

SOUTHBRIDGE MASS
523 MRA

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
C	308

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

RJI # 2-9

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

Town SouthbridgeAddress 29 Summer StreetHistoric Name Sylvester Dresser HouseUse: Present rectoryOriginal residential

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1870Source maps, visual analysisStyle transitional Italianate/Victorian
GothicArchitect unknownExterior Wall Fabric brickOutbuildings carriage house (C)Major Alterations (with dates) noneCondition GoodMoved no Date n/aAcreage one acreSetting residentialUTM REFERENCE 18/745 320/4661 795USGS QUADRANGLE Southbridge MA CTSCALE 1:25,000Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci

ed. S. Ceccacci

Organization Southbridge Historical Com-
missionDate May 1986

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Sylvester Dresser House is significant for its association with the town's mid-19th century real estate development and its stylish brick Italianate design. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of 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.

Strongly influenced by the Victorian Gothic style, this house is more Italianate in its shape and arrangement. Bearing Italianate characteristics such as the squarish body, three bay center entry facade, the round arched entrance and the heavy balcony, it has strong vertical elements such as the tall facade pavilion, high pitched roof and high pitched facade gable which are typically Victorian. Also Victorian are the jerkinhead dormer, gable apron and stick-like brackets. Because of the probable late 1865 date of construction, such a mixture of styles is not unusual. Other surviving houses of the same caliber and of the same approximate date in Southbridge are either Italianate or show a blending of Italianate and Victorian elements (e.g., 14 South Street, Form #D-440; 495 Main Street, form #D-21). The use of brick as a building material is unusual for houses of this period in Southbridge. The selection of brick is, however, easy to explain since the owner of the house was a brick manufacturer.

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

Sylvester Dresser (1820-1898) was an important and active member of the Southbridge community during the second half of the 19th-century. Born in Charlton, he was the son of Asa Dresser, Jr. and Elizabeth McInstry (sic) (McKinstry). In 1848 he married N. Maria Morse, the daughter of Deacon Oliver Morse.

After studying at Nichols Academy in Dudley, Dresser was a school teacher for eight years working in a number of towns in the region. He later served as assistant principal at Nichols Academy. Changing his career, the young man settled permanently in Southbridge in 1842.

With a capital of \$80.00, he bought the stock in trade of William S. Knowlton: fancy goods, toys, musical instruments etc. Having met with success, he later bought the jewelry and bookstore of Robert H. Cole and added jewelry, silver, clocks and periodicals to his stock. After deciding to sell the business, he operated an apparently prosperous stove and hardware enterprise from 1852 to 1864.

In 1865 Dresser became involved in brick manufacturing, ultimately owning as many as three brick yards in Southbridge and Dudley. At the same time he also took up lumbering, apparently to fire his brick kilns. In 1866 when the railroad came to town, he shipped a load of his bricks on the first freight train to leave Southbridge.

For forty years Dresser was a director of the Southbridge Savings Bank. He was also active in town affairs, serving at various times as Selectman, Town Treasurer, Town Clerk, Assessor,

(See Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

maps, atlases

scrapbook, Jacob Edwards Memorial Library

_____. Biographical Review. Boston: Biographical Publishing Co., 1899, p. 568.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	MR	Form No:
Southbridge		C-308
Property Name: Sylvester Dresser House 29 Summer Street		

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

Overseer of the Poor and School Board Member. He was elected to the state legislature in 1850 and 1852. In 1861 he served as a state senator from the Worcester Southeast District. He also served for some time as Trial Justice.

Sylvester Dresser had an active role in the development of parts of Southbridge. In 1853 he bought a parcel of land which had belonged to the ~~Bella~~ Tiffany estate on Elm Street (form #C-301). Over a number of years he built houses, including his own home, on this land and sold off house lots to others. Although available maps do not indicate precisely the extent of this property, it seems likely that it included a triangle of land bounded approximately by Elm, Park and Everett Streets. Dresser also built fourteen houses on brickyard property he owned on Charlton City Road.

In 1855, only shortly after Dresser had purchased the Tiffany property, only scattered houses lined Elm Street, becoming sparser the further the distance from Main Street. There were hardly any buildings south of the intersection with Eastford Road. Everett Street did not exist and no cross streets had been put through off of Elm Street. By 1870, Everett Street and several cross streets, including Park and Summer Streets, had been opened and a few houses had been built in the area. Sylvester Dresser's house was one of these. At that time, its grounds extended the full length of Summer Street between Elm and Everett Streets. No buildings stood across from it on the other side of Summer Street. By 1878 the east side of Elm Street had been almost completely developed from Summer Street southward to the intersection with Everett Street. A number of houses had also been built on Everett Street near Park Street. By 1898 Elm, Everett, Park and Summer Streets had been built up. Even the land opposite Dresser's house on Summer Street was thickly settled. The grounds to his house, however, remained undeveloped until the early years of the 20th-century, some time after his death.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Southbridge MRA
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Comins--Wall House **Substantive Review**Keeper Beth L. Sarge 6-22-89
Attest _____22. Congregational Church **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____23. Cummings, E.B., House **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____24. Dani and Soldani Cabinet Makers and
Wood Workers Factory **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____25. Dennison School House **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____26. Dresser, Sylvester, House **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____27. Dunbar--Vinton House **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____28. Durfee, Henry E., Farmhouse **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____29. Elm Street Fire House **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____30. Evangelical Free Church **Entered in the
National Register**Keeper Shelene Byers 6/22/89
Attest _____

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Dresser, Sylvester, House
NAME:

MULTIPLE Southbridge MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

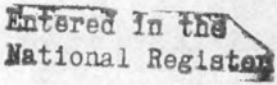
DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000523

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 

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
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

 sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Sylvester Dresser Hse, (C.308) 29 Summer St.
Southbridge MA ~~MA~~
Ceccacci, 1986
Southbridge Historical Commission
Roll # 2.9

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SOUTHERIDGE MASS
MRA

JOHN E. O'DONNELL & ASSOCIATES
AUBURN, MAINE
1271

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS

A horizontal scale bar labeled "SCALE IN FEET". It has three major tick marks labeled "0", "100", and "200". The distance between 0 and 100 is divided into four equal segments, and the distance between 100 and 200 is also divided into four equal segments, indicating that each segment represents 25 feet.

47

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294