

# FORM B – BUILDING

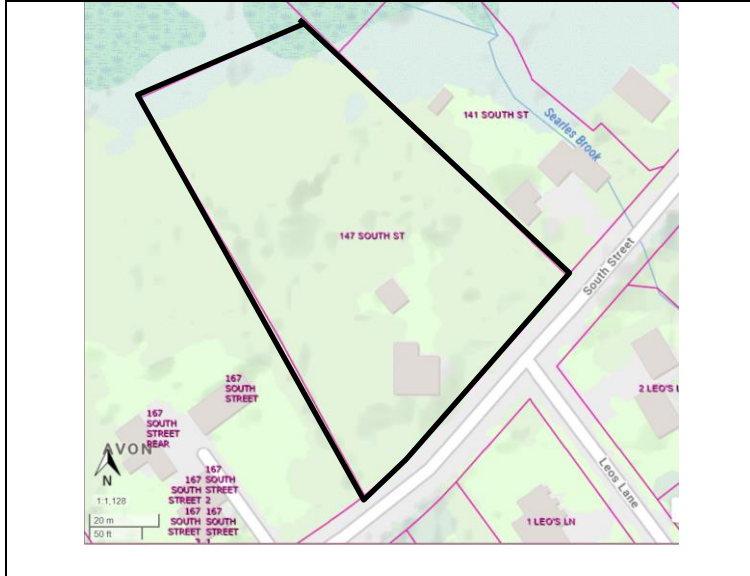
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## Photograph



View looking northwest.

## Locus Map



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

C3/ 1/ 9/ 1

Blue Hills

AVO.8  
AVO.69

**Town/City:** Avon

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

**Address:** 147 South Street

**Historic Name:** John and Mary French House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1745

**Source:** Deed

**Style/Form:** No Style

**Architect/Builder:** Not Known

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Wood or Cementitious Clapboard; Wood  
Shingles / Wood trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Carriage House

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Chimney removed;  
Replacement wood or cementitious siding (early 21<sup>st</sup> C);  
Replacement vinyl sash windows (circa 2008)

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 1.9

**Setting:** Located on a suburban residential street along which 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses are scattered among mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century infill houses. Ralph D. Butler Middle School (1962) is located across the street.

**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies

**Organization:** Avon Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2022

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

147 SOUTH ST

## MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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.*

Located on a level lot, the house is oriented to the south, at an angle to the street. A semicircular gravel driveway is located east of the house. The lot is covered with lawn near the house; the remainder of the lot is wooded. The 1-story frame building rests on a cut stone foundation and is capped with a side-gabled roof with overhanging eaves and a molded cornice. The house appears to have been recently re-sided with wood or cementitious siding on the façade and wood shingles on the side elevation. A new Craftsman Revival-style door is centered in the symmetrical five-bay façade. The side elevations are three bays deep with a pair of windows in the gable peak. A small, shed-roof porch and a 1-story perpendicular ell are attached to the rear elevation. Windows throughout the house are vinyl-sash replacements with narrow, molded crowns. Interior inspections were beyond the scope of this survey, but a closer examination of surviving framing, floorplans, and interior features and finishes by an architectural historian with expertise in early Massachusetts building technology could provide additional insights into a likely original construction date and the physical evolution of the building over time.

A 1-story frame carriage house (early 20<sup>th</sup> C [?], AVO.69) is located north of the house. Clad with wood clapboards, the building is capped with a gable roof with shallow eaves. A square-plan Colonial Revival cupola is centered on the roof ridge. A double-leaf, board and batten vehicle door is centered in the south elevation. The side (east) elevation contains two windows.

### 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.*

147 South Street is reported to have been constructed in 1749 for John French<sup>1</sup> across the street from the house of his twin brother Dependence French.<sup>2</sup> In 1749, John French purchased 50 acres of land here.<sup>3</sup> John French (1714- ) married Mary Fenno (ca. 1727- ) in 1748. The property appears to have been transferred to John French, Junior in 1762<sup>4</sup> and to John French, 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1802.<sup>5</sup> From the 1830s through the 1870s, the house was the residence of Charles A. French (ca. 1812-1892) and his wife, Sarah Linfield French, whom he had married in 1833. Census records indicate that the extended household included their children, his brother William French (ca. 1800-1884), and Charles' mother, Mehitable French (ca. 1781- ). Charles A. French worked as a farmer and bootmaker. Charles and William's brother, Ethan French, lived across the street at 186 South Street (See AVO.70). By the time of the 1880 census, William French was living here with shoemaker Rufus P. Ross (1827-1907)<sup>6</sup> and Ross' wife, Caroline (1828-1919). Rufus and Caroline Ross purchased the property the following year.<sup>7</sup> After their deaths, the property was owned by Inez Baxter Howland from 1920 until 1977.<sup>8</sup> Inez Howland lived here with her husband, Earl, and their family. Earl Howland worked as a bookkeeper for a grocery store, according to census records.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

City Directories.

<sup>1</sup> Kuhn, Helen M. "John French House," MHC B Form AVO.8, June 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Hanna: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Book 76, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Book 97, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 18, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #162640579. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1048, p. 476.

<sup>8</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1467, p. 138 and Book 5377, p. 168.

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Hanna, William F. *The Story of Avon*. Avon: Avon Centennial Committee, 1988.

Hodges, Joseph. *Plan of the Town of Stoughton*. 1830. Massachusetts State Archives.

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Talbot, Newton. [Buildings standing in Stoughton in 1775]. Drawn 1929. <https://stoughtonhistory.com/1775map.htm>

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View looking west.



View looking north toward carriage house/garage.