

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View looking southeast.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2022

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

C3/ 2/ 10/ /

Blue Hills

AVO.70

Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 186 South Street

Historic Name: Dependence and Mary French House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1745

Source: Hanna; Talbot

Style/Form: Colonial

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Not visible

Wall/Trim: Aluminum Siding, Vinyl Siding / Aluminum Trim, Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Vinyl and aluminum siding; Ell added (unknown date); 6/1 wood sash windows.

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.4

Setting: Located on a suburban residential street along which 18th- and 19th-century houses are scattered among mid-20th-century infill houses. Ralph D. Butler Middle School (1962) abuts the property to the south.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

186 SOUTH STREET

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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 gently-sloping lot covered with lawn, the house is oriented to the northwest, at an angle to the street. An asphalt-paved driveway leads from South Street past the houses' west elevation to a parking area at the south corner of the lot. The 1-story frame building is capped with a side-gabled roof. An off-center brick chimney with a corbelled cap is located near the center of the roof ridge. A box cornice is located along the façade and rear elevations; the side elevations have no overhang. A paneled wood door framed by full-height sidelights is centered in the symmetrical five-bay façade. The southwest (side) elevation is two bays deep with two windows in the gable peak. The northeast (side) elevation is three bays deep (one is 4/1 wood sash) with two windows in the gable peak. The rear elevation contains a door and a pair of 3/3 wood sash windows framed by single 6/1 wood sash windows. A wood deck is attached to the rear elevation.

A 1-story, side-gabled ell is attached to the south corner of the main block. The ell rests on a banked cut stone and poured concrete foundation. The northwest elevation has an off-center entrance with a front-gabled vestibule. The vestibule contains a paneled wood door on the front elevation and a 4/1 wood sash window on each side elevation. The ell's façade contains two single windows at the east end. A ribbon of four windows continues on the southwest and southeast elevations (perhaps enclosing a former porch [?]). A hipped-roof vestibule is located at the southeast corner of the ell. Unless otherwise noted, windows throughout the house are 6/1 wood sash with exterior metal-frame storm windows.

While aluminum siding and vinyl siding have been added to the house, the building remains a good example of mid-18th-century Colonial architecture in Avon. The building's low, deep volume, paneled wood door framed by full-height sidelights, symmetrical façade, and central chimney demonstrate the building's early appearance. 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 on the physical evolution of the building over time.

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.

186 South Street is reported to have been constructed circa 1745 for Dependence French and located across the street from 147 South Street (AVO.8), which was owned by his twin brother, John French.¹ Dependence French (1714-1803)² and Mary Linfield French (1722-1801)³ were married in 1738 in Braintree. The couple had eight children,⁴ including William French (1751-1821).⁵ William French married Mary Perkins in 1773 and the couple had two sons, William and Alpheus, and five daughters: Rhoda French Carr; Phebe French Wales; Rebekah French Porter, and Martha French Packard, and Sibbel French Brett. In his will, William French split this 53-acre South Street property among his children.

¹ Hanna: 5 and Talbot, Newton. [Map showing buildings standing in Stoughton in 1775]. Drawn 1929.
<https://stoughtonhistory.com/1775map.htm>.

² Findagrave.com Memorial #149636753. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

³ Findagrave.com Memorial #173932282. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

⁴ Massachusetts Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988. Holbrook Research Institute. Ancestry.com. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

⁵ Findagrave.com Memorial #119610174. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

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The property was later occupied by Alpheus French (1780-ca. 1834), his wife Mehitabel Brett French, whom he married in 1800, and their sons, Ethan (1804-1852),⁶ William (1800-1884) and Alpheus (ca. 1800-1884). Ethan and William French shared ownership of the property after their father's death.⁷ The property included the house, an "old cider house," barn and two boot makers' shops.⁸ In 1829, bootmaker Ethan French (1804-1852)⁹ married Sarah Leach Wentworth (1808-1890)¹⁰ and the couple made 186 South Street their home. The couple had six children, one of whom, Ethan Emery French (1830-1913),¹¹ lived here for the rest of his life. Their daughter Sophia, a schoolteacher, and their son Alpheus, a farmer, lived here for many years as well. Ethan French's brothers, William and Charles A. French, lived across the street at 147 South Street (See AVO.8).

In 1899, Alpheus French (III) married for the second time to Carrie Wyand, a widow who had recently emigrated with her children from Canada. The 1920 census records indicate that Carrie Wyand and her children, Jennie and Bradford, soon joined the household, which included E. Emery French, and Alpheus French's son from his first marriage, George. In 1946, H. Bradford Wyand sold the property to Charles and Rena Beasley of Quincy.¹²

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⁶ Findagrave.com Memorial #102191349. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 107, 461.

⁸ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 205, 440.

⁹ Findagrave.com Memorial #102191349. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

¹⁰ Findagrave.com Memorial #102191369. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

¹¹ Findagrave.com Memorial #219987078. Accessed Oct. 21, 2022.

¹² Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 2639, p. 584.

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View looking east.



View looking southeast at original house.



View looking west from Patrick Clark Drive toward east and south (rear) elevations



View looking northwest from Patrick Clark Drive toward rear elevation.