

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

67-005	Sandwich		SDW.71
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Town/City: Sandwich

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

Photograph



Address: 238 Rte 6A

Historic Name: Nye, Peleg II House

Uses: Present: (in disrepair)

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: c.1770

Source: Nye family records

Style/Form: Colonial

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: clapboards on front, rest shingles

Roof: ridge

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

mental hospital (1903)

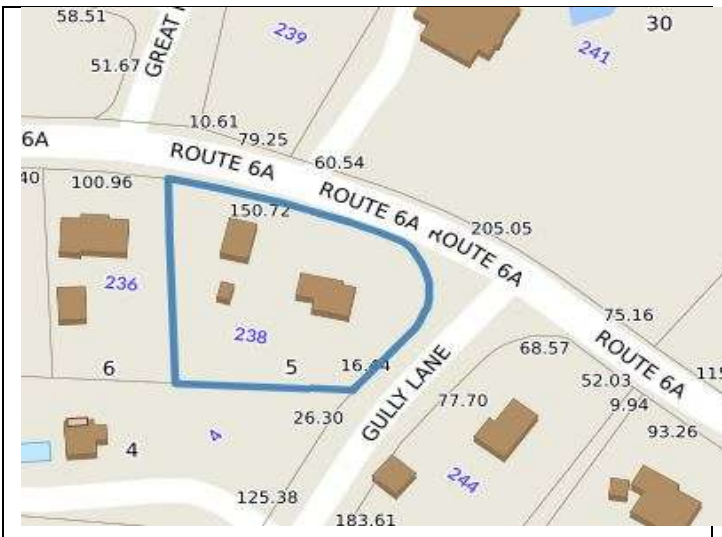
Condition: deteriorated

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .69

Setting: Spring Hill is an upland area on Sandwich's north side, located between the Shawme and Scorton Marshes. The recorded area includes the arc of Spring Hill Road and the portion of Route 6A embraced by it, extending from Quaker Meetinghouse Road (E) to Great Island Road (W). This early-settlement area, includes approximately 46 historic (pre-1930) buildings, and 67 non-historic buildings, along with several important agricultural landscapes that play a major role in defining its special historic character.

Locus Map



Recorded by: D. Bayley

Organization: Sandwich Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): Nov / 2011

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.

The Peleg Nye II House is a 2½-story, three-bay half-house. Until 2009 it also had a two-story side wing and two single-story rear ells, all demolished. A large early 20th-century shop was located here. The gabled-roof structure, with an extended front-roof slope, had a set of barn doors, a centered entrance door, and a large multi-light stationary window. A shed-roof open wing extended from the south gable end. The house is situated close to the road and is in disrepair. The chimney rises above the entrance in the end bay of the main block. Windows date from the late 19th century, with their 2/2 sash.

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.

This house seems to have been built c. 1770 by Peleg Nye II, born 1743, who raised his family here. When it was time for his daughter Sylvia to marry, Nye built the Federal-style house at 246 Route 6A (SDW.70) for Sylvia and her husband, Thomas Hamblin. It was subsequently sold out of the family, being owned by E. Freeman in 1857. About 1869 it was owned by Rufus Conant of the well-known educational family. In 1880 it was occupied by Mrs. Conant, her daughter Mrs. Abigail Conant Cooke (1822-1922) and Mrs. Cooke's daughter Alice Rebecca Cooke (1861-1956). (The Cookes are Mayflower descendants.) In 1886 Alice entered into a formal agreement with the State Board of Lunacy and Charity to care for 3 deranged women at her home. A state inspector later mistakenly tried to remove the women, but Alice was ably defended by town selectmen and in 1895 she was formally licensed to open a mental hospital at 238 Rte 6A and keep and treat insane female patients there. She named it the Locust Grove Asylum.

Alice's household included her mother Abigail and her sister, Minnie. Per historian R. A. Lovell, "they all lived in a consciously archaic fashion; they were abstemious, prohibitionist and vegetarian." Minnie became an expert photographer; her stereoptican views of Sandwich scenes were popular in town. The ladies had a profound respect for the sacredness of all life and found it impossible to kill even the rats and mice that came into the house. Miss Cooke had known Thornton W. Burgess (1874-1965) as a boy in Sandwich, and was aware that the woods and pond behind this property (see SDW.73) were the genesis for the nature stories that began to appear after 1912. She was a local Library trustee for many years, ensuring that this Library had a Burgess collection, and about 1935 advised Burgess that she herself was feeding and entertaining an unusual collection of skunks and raccoons that came to the old woodshed connected to the rear of the house and even to her kitchen table. Burgess came, and out of what he saw wrote "Aunt Sally's Friends in Fur" and introduced the story of the "animal nightclub," the woodshed and "Aunt Sally" to thousands via the Radio Nature League. The Historical Society here has related photographs, an oil painting and the original manuscript of the Aunt Sally book. Miss Cooke kept up the animal nightclub until 1947. She died in 1956 and left much of her property to the Cahoons, who had helped supply food for the animals.

In the 1970s the property was owned by Capt. Colin H. Bell and was used as a furniture refinishing business called "The Country Mouse." Currently it is owned by Thomas White, a woodworker.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Cross, Timothy A., Sandwich Historical Commission, Massachusetts Historical Commission Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) Form B, 3/28/1972

Lovell, Russell. Sandwich. A Cape Cod Town. Town of Sandwich Archives and Historical Center. William S. Sullwold Publishing, Inc. Taunton, Mass. 1984. pp. 490-494.

Massachusetts Historical Commission Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS)

SDW.L: Spring Hill

SDW.R: Old King's Highway Regional Historic District

SDW.Y: Spring Hill Historic District

Town of Sandwich Archives and Historical Center. Nye Family Records; Historic Asset Files