



SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORIC COMMISSION

Town House, 17 Common Street, Southborough, MA 01772-1662

Tel: 508-485-0710 Fax: 508-480-0161

Betsy Friedberg,
National Register Director,
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston MA02125

July 7, 2014

Dear Betsy Friedberg,

Re: Joseph Burnett House (1849, update ca. 1860), 84 Main Street, Southborough
MHC # SBR-21 (attached)

On behalf of the Southborough Historical Commission (SHC), I writing to inform you about last night's (July 14) meeting of the Planning Board who recently received an ANR (Approval Not Required) Plan for demolition of the prominent Burnett House. The Planning Board declined to grant the approval contingent on advice from Town Counsel. If the Board makes no decision within 21 days, by law, the application will be approved.

Developer Robert Moss, who is purchasing the property this Friday July 18, is the applicant, and plans to demolish the prominent Joseph Burnett House, which sits on 4.71 acres at 84 Main Street, at the west end of the downtown area. Joseph Burnett (1820-1894), one of Southborough's most important residents, was responsible for the Second-Empire stone mansion.

Anne Forbes wrote the Form A for Main Street in 1999 as part of the Southborough Historic Resources Survey. In her statement of significance, she has written:

"The Joseph Burnett House meets Criteria A and C of the National Register individually (as a complex) for its associations with two generations of the Burnett family, who profoundly influenced the economic, educational, social, religious, and architectural development of Southborough from the 1840s through the early twentieth century. Built as the country home of Joseph Burnett, it is particularly significant as the residence of the founder of nationally-important Burnett's Flavoring Extracts, and of state- and regionally-important Deerfoot Farms, St. Mark's School, and St. Mark's Church."

The Town was surprised by the prospective sale because it has not been advertised on the open market. The majority of Southborough residents look at the prospect of demolition as a devastating blow. The Planning Board is working with the developer to dissuade him from demolition. Residents are scrambling to find a solution, but with no demolition delay law in place and no Local Historic District it is an uphill battle.

Local coverage of the issue appears on local blog:

<http://www.mysouthborough.com/2014/07/14/garfield-house-may-be-demolished-within-weeks-town-without-historic-protection-bylaws/>

Yours sincerely,

Kate Matison (Vice-Chair) Southborough Historic Commission