FORM A - AREA

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

USGS Quad  | Area Letter  | Form Numbers in Area
----------|-------------|---------------------
Marlborough | AL          | 24, 57, 67, 91, 650, 651, 916-918, 1230-1241

Assessor's Sheets 53, 64-67, 76-79, 88-90

Town ____________________________ Marlborough
Place (neighborhood or village) ____________________________
Name of Area ______________ West Marlborough
Present Use ___________________ residential, commercial, industrial
Construction Dates or Period ___________ 18th to 20th centuries
Overall Condition __________________ fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations much visible building alteration; many late-20th-century streets and buildings

Acreage __________________ ca. 200 acres

Recorded by _______________ Anne Forbes, consultant
Organization __________________ Marlborough Historical Comm.
Date (month/day/year) ___________ 5/30/95

Streets included:

Bigelow Street: from 236 south
Boston Post Road west of I-495
Dudley Street: #39
Elm Street west of I-495
Glen Street
Millham Street
Northboro Road

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

*includes entire street, unless otherwise noted

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form
AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION  [X]  see continuation sheet

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

Although the definition of the western part of Marlborough used to be the open farmland and woods between Lake Williams and the Northborough border, today its eastern boundary is clearly marked by the north-south line of the major highway, I-495, and much of its character is defined by the post-1950 development associated with the new transportation route. In contrast to the southwest corner of the city, however, where the old farms were virtually obliterated to make way for large industrial park development, this still includes many scattered examples of historic buildings representing a broad range of styles from at least the early eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries.

The four oldest houses in the area are located on Elm Street and Northborough Road. Part of the large seven-bay Colonial "saltbox" at 475 Elm Street was formerly believed to date to the 1680's. It is more likely that its first sections were built in the early eighteenth century. Two other mid-eighteenth-century houses here are the classic five-bay, 2 1/2-story center-chimney Noah Brigham House at 796 Elm Street, and, the only example in Marlborough of a rare 1 1/2-story gambrel-roofed center-chimney house, the Felton/Brown/Dunton House, which in 1802 was moved several rods west of its former location on the Boston Post Road to 31 Northborough Road. Two years later the construction of what is today Marlborough's best-preserved example of a large, square, four-chimneyed Federal "brick-ender" was completed at 139 Northborough Road by Gershom Rice, II. (See Forms 57, 67, 91, and 24.)

(Cont.)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE  [X]  see continuation sheet

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.

The western section of Marlborough south of the Robin Hill district was a rural area of scattered farms and woods for centuries. Much of it was originally part of the vast farm of Thomas Rice, one of Marlborough's proprietors at the founding of the town, who acquired over a thousand acres of land in this section of Marlborough and in what later became Northborough. Through the middle of the eighteenth century, portions of his farm were sold off or apportioned to family members, and became home to many generations of Rices, Brighams, Feltons, and others. Early Rice houses still stand at 475 Elm Street and 139 Northborough Road, and homes of Brighams at 796 Elm and 228 Glen Streets. (See Forms 57, 24, 67, and 650.) Glen Street, in fact, was a small enclave of Brighams and their in-laws, the Ames family, where by 1830 a grist mill, and later a saw mill and wagon shop operated on Millham Brook. As early as 1830 another saw mill, under the ownership of Simeon Cunningham, was located at a dam further downstream, just north of Millham Street.

The schoolhouse for the district, which came to be called the Rice School, was located at the intersection of Glen Street and the Boston Post Road as early as the 1790's. With the exception of Dudley Street, which was cut through linking Elm Street and East Dudley between 1835 and 1856, most of the area's major roads were in place by 1800. Two, however, Otis Street north of Millham, and the north end of Muddy Lane south of Millham, were abandoned as public roads in this century, as was the southwest end of Glen Street. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES  [ ]  see continuation sheet

Maps, birdseye views, and atlases: 1803, 1830, 1835, 1856/7, 1875, 1889.


Hudson. History of the Town of Marlborough. 1862.

Marlborough directories and tax valuations.

Marlborough Vital Records.

Marlborough Historical Society: Moineau Photograph Collection.

[ ] Recommended as a National Register District. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Two more Federal period houses survive in the area, as well. The Brigham House at 228 Glen Street, (see Form #650), a smaller, two-story, one-room-deep "brick-ender" of about 1820 also has a hipped roof, but the little 1 1/2-story brick-ended Drury House at 275 Northborough Road, constructed at about the same time and now highly altered, was built with a pitched roof.

Several mid-nineteenth-century houses are scattered throughout the area. Most are altered buildings with their gable-ends facing the street. The ca. 1840 Solomon Rice House at 481 Elm Street, a tall 2 1/2-story Greek Revival residence with a pedimented facade and echinus-molded cornice, is one of the best-preserved. Also dating to this period is the rare brick 1 1/2-story, five-bay Arnold cottage at 626 Elm Street. The very altered side-gabled, two-story house Ames House was standing at 39 Dudley Street by 1856. Although one gable end of 62 Glen Street faces the road, most of this house may have been built in the 1860's as a 2 1/2-story, side-gabled house, probably for Robert Ames.

West Marlborough, which remained a rural area with no major industry until the twentieth century, did not undergo the explosive building boom that the center part of the city experienced in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some houses were constructed on parcels divided out from the older farms during that period. The two-story, five-bay Fairbanks House, with two small ridge chimneys at 61 Northborough Road was standing by 1875, but most of the others appear to date to the 1890's. Of those, most are altered, but the highly-decorated A. Wood House at 214 Bigelow Street (which may be a replacement or renovation of a former house on the site), is one of Marlborough's better examples of a vernacular Queen Anne house in a rural location. It retains its clapboard and pattern-shingled siding, sunburst panels under the end gables, and elaborate saw-cut decoration over a window in a facade wall gable and in the cornice of a square, pyramid-roofed corner turret.

Although many of the early-twentieth-century houses along the Boston Post Road have been demolished for larger commercial development, several modest early-twentieth-century house-types are still represented here. Most are highly altered, however. Among the exceptions are three houses on Bigelow Street. Two are Craftsman Bungalows of the 1920's--a long hip-roofed, three-bay example with exposed rafter-ends and a front porch on tapered triangular posts at #152, and a side-gabled, shingled variant with screened front porch and a shed-roofed dormer at #2. The area's only surviving Dutch Colonial Revival house still stands in good condition at 236 Bigelow Street. Several Cape Cod Cottages were built in the area in the 1930's and 1940's, especially along the Post Road corridor. By far the best-preserved is a saltbox version at 14 Glen Street, which retains its wood clapboards and 8-over-8 and 6-over-6 window sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Two small-scale shoe-manufacturing shops were operating in this district in 1875, one on the Wood property at 214 Bigelow Street, the other on Millham Street at the Northborough Line. With the exception of the small mills and the shoe shops, no significant industries were developed here, however, until after 1900. The late-nineteenth-century project that had the largest impact on the area was undertaken by the city in the early 1890's, when it damned the lower end of Millham Brook to create the 152-acre Millham Reservoir. (See Form #916). The Marlborough Water Works built its second pumping station in 1892 at the reservoir's southeast corner, where over the next two decades the city also channeled and rerouted the brook through a series of small canals and sluices. (Cont.)
As automobile traffic built up along the old Boston Post Road, a string of modest early-twentieth-century houses were built along it, roadside farm stands sprang up, and the Rice apple orchards were established by John Rice. No other significant development took place in the area until the 1960’s, when Route 495 was built, and the Post Road began to fill with shopping centers and fast-food restaurants, and the entire 1,400-acre southwest section was laid out as an industrial park. The Post Road, in this century designated Mass. Route 20, was straightened in two sections, leaving small loops of the old Northborough Road north and south of it, and many of the old farms, as well as Rice’s Orchard, were abandoned, demolished, or plowed under. Both commercial and industrial development continue today in this part of Marlborough, which is the most rapidly growing section of the city, and promises to keep changing into the twenty-first century.

The buildings discussed above and listed on the Area Data Sheet represent some of the most historically or architecturally significant resources in the area. There are several more historic properties located in the area, however. See Area Sketch Map for their locations.
**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

**Community**  +  **Property**
Marlborough  +  West Marlborough

**Area(s)**  +  **Form Nos.**
AL  +  24, 57, 67, 91, 650, 651, 916-918, 1230-1241

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**AREA DATA SHEET**

NOTE: Although the inventory includes the entire area shown on the Area Sketch Map, only resources which are mentioned in text of the Area Form have been given inventory numbers and are listed on the Area Data Sheet. As a rule, these represent the most historically or architecturally significant resources in the area. There are many more historic properties located within the area, however. (See Area Sketch Map for their locations.) Starred properties (*) have individual or small area forms.

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<th>Style/type</th>
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<td>ca. 1920's</td>
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<td>Queen Anne</td>
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<td>1239</td>
<td>89-1</td>
<td>275 Boston Post Rd., West</td>
<td>ca. 1820</td>
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<td>1235</td>
<td>78-6</td>
<td>39 Dudley Street</td>
<td>S. Ames House</td>
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<td>67-3</td>
<td>475 Elm Street</td>
<td>Rice House</td>
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<td>89-9</td>
<td>228 Glen Street</td>
<td>B. Brigham House</td>
<td>ca. 1820</td>
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<td>*651</td>
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<td>228 Glen Street</td>
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<td>79-2</td>
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<td>78-28</td>
<td>139 Northboro Rd.</td>
<td>Gershom Rice II House</td>
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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community: Marlborough
Property: West Marlborough

Area(s): AL

Form Nos.: 24, 35, 57, 91, 650, 651, 916-918, 1230-1241
INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community
Marlborough

Property
West Marlborough

Area(s)
AL

Form Nos.
24, 35, 57, 91, 650, 651,
916-918, 1230-1241

Massachusetts Historical Commission
30 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

301 Boston Post Rd.

275 Boston Post Rd.

39 Dudley St.
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*INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET*

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

[Images of houses]
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Area(s)  | Form Nos.  
AL       | 24, 35, 57, 91, 650, 651, 916-918, 1230-1241

**Property Images**

- **779 Glen St.**
- **14 Glen St.**
- **62 Glen St.**
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35 Dookbrough Rd.

61 Dookbrough Rd.