

(Attach photo here)

FORM B - BUILDING SURVEY

25

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

1. Is this building historically significant to:
Town Commonwealth Nation

Building has historical connection with the following themes: (see also reverse side)

- Scholar
- Agriculture
- Art/Sculpture
- Education
- Government
- Literature
- Music
- Commerce/industry
- Science/invention
- Travel/communication
- Military Affairs
- Religion/philosophy
- Indians
- Other

Development of town/city

Architectural reason for inventorying:

see attached sheet

2. Town Chelsea

Street address 1 Billerica Rd.

Name Fiske House

Use: original & present Dwelling

Present owner Eustace Fiske

Open to public NO

Date 1798 Style Federal

Source of date Watus, "History of Chelsea"

Architect _____

OR part of Area # _____

3. CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added very few changes

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material _____

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard Brick Stone Other Brick ends, painted white

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard slate
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 1/2 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed small, at rear

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 PORTICO _____ Balcony _____

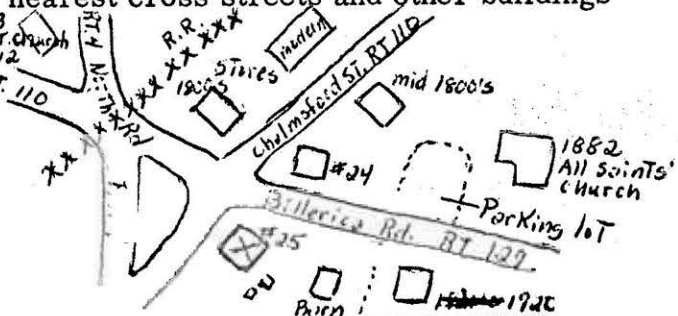
FACADE: Gable end: Front side Ornament 6 full length pilasters

Entrance: Side Front Center Side Details: large fanlight over front door. side door - fanlight & classical pediment - entrance to brick back exits

Windows: Spacing: Regular Irregular Identical Varied 5x5 Bay, 6 over 6 panes

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings



6. Footage of structure from street 40 feet
Property has 380 feet frontage on Street
175' (RT. 4) + 205' (Billerica Rd.)

Recorder Jane B. Drury

For Chelsea Historical Commission

Photo # 4-9410 Date April 8, 1973

SEE REVERSE SIDE

RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

1. Outbuildings 1 barn (shake shingles), 1 well house, 2 small bridges (1 has basement + shake shingles)

2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden Formal/Informal
Predominant features _____
Landscape architect _____

3. Neighboring Structures
Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.
Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern Georgian
Use: Residential Commercial Religious Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

Water History of Chelmsford (1917)
Chelmsford Vital Records to 1850 (Essex Institute, 1914)
1831 map
1875 Burs Atlas
William Northrop + Frances Andrews: notes
HABSurvey

RESTRICTIONS _____

Original Owner: Simon Spaulding, Jr.
Deed Information: Book Number 12 Page 394 , Northrop Registry of Deeds
" " " 379 " "

1 Billerica Rd.
Chelmsford

Architectural reason for inventorying:

This is one of the most stately houses in Chelmsford, and it commands a prominent place in the center of the town. It is a square house with brick ends which carry the four chimneys up through the gable roof. A belt course bisects these brick ends. Its pilastered front and fanlights over three outer doors are very noteworthy. Dentils grace the eaves. The delicate though well-made fence in front of the house was built in 1839. Portions of old wallpapers, handsome dados, and hand-carved "ball and tassel" molding in the livingroom are a few of the interior features. The house has been changed very little from its original condition, and the present owner has the plans left by the original owner.

The house is listed with HABS. Representatives of Sturbridge Village were very much interested in it but found the building impossible to move because of its brick ends, pegged construction, and large beams.

Historic importance of site:

The Fiske house occupies the site of an earlier house owned and occupied by Major John Minot. In 1784 Major Minot deeded to William Bridge $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land and buildings located south of the present house. The well of the Bridge house may still be seen on the terrace just south of the Fiske house.

In 1784 Simeon Spaulding, Jr. (see #41), merchant, bought the Minot land and in 1798 built the new house. Because of its high cost, he had to mortgage it in 1807 and to sell it in 1812. However, he repurchased it in 1818 and kept it until 1830, when he sold it to his brother. He is said to have loved the house and was anxious to keep it in the family to be handed down to posterity. However, there were then frequent changes in ownership probably due to speculating in what was then (and now) an unusually fine property.

In 1835 Thomas Moore bought it and ran it as the Lafayette House. The bar has been replaced in the bar-room (S.W. room) by the present owners. In 1839 Mr. & Mrs. John Minot Fiske visited Chelmsford intending to buy his great-grandfather's old house. Mrs. Fiske admired the Tavern where they were staying, the Lafayette House, and Mr. Fiske bought it instead. The rail fence in front of the house was built at this time. The house has since remained in the Fiske family.

THE FISKE HOUSE

See Hist. p. 395

Its History

John Minot owned 4 acres of land and deeded $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre, south of the present house to his son-in-law, William Bridge, who was son of Rev. Ebenezer Bridge.

He sold his own place on the corner to Elijah Proctor.

Proctor sold to Simeon Spaulding, who added 6 acres to the fame and in Spaulding built the present house.

1812 Simeon Spaulding sold to Azariah Spaulding and Joseph Bailey.

Simeon Spaulding re-purchased the place and kept it till

Simeon sold to Mathias Spaulding. Within three years it was owned by William Fletcher, John Foster and Joel Adams. C.E.A. Bartlett was born here (Grandson of J. Adams)

Thomas Moore owned it and kept a Tavern here. It was called the Lafayette House. The lower () room contained the bar which with its furnishings are still in the house.

Mr. & Mrs. John Minot Fiske purchased the property, which has since remained in the Fiske family.

The old fence was built at this time.

THE OLD BARN

Hist.
p. 395

"An old barn once stood where the road now runs between the house and the Public Square and remained there some time after the road was laid out in 1829, making it necessary to drive around it."

The Fiskes gave the land to the Town for the Park - or Square at the Center.

John Minot Fiske's son, Benjamin Minot, was born 1826 at Charlestown. While living in Chelmsford married Elizabeth Ann Parkhurse, da of Rev. John Parkhurst, Baptist minister for 48 years in South Chelmsford and Center.

Compiled by Miss Frances Andrews
Circa 1945

Spalding Fiske House

From notes of Wm Nerthrup 1940 footnotes Margaret Mills 1967

(1)

The Fiske house at Central Square at the Corner of Lowell and Billerica Streets was built by Simeon Spalding, son of Col Simeon Spalding in 1798

It occupies the site of an earlier house owned and occupied by Major John Minot with a but four acres of land including the triangular "square" in front of the present house. In 1784 Major Minot deeded to William Bridge, son of Rev Ebenezer Bridge about 1/2 acre of land and buildings thereon located just South of the present house.

Major Bridge had married Rachel daughter of Major John Minot. The wall of the Bridge house may still be seen on the terrance south of the Fiske house .

In the same year (1784) Major Minot sold his house and land to Elijah Proctor who sold it to Simeon Spalding in 1785. He added six acres to the property and later (1798) built the new house.

He was obliged to mortgage it 1807 and 1812 sold it to his brother Azariah Spalding and Joseph Bailey. Joseph Bailey was then living in the house on the opposite corner of Billerica Street, now (1940) the Rectory of All Saints Church. Bailey was a bookbinder and bound school books.

In 1818 Simeon Spalding repurchased the place. During this interval he had been proprietor of the Middlesex Tavern at Middlesex Village. The property was in his hands until 1830 when it was sold by him to his brother Dr Matthias Spalding of Amherst N; H. Simeon Spalding is said to have loved the home he had built and was anxious to keep it in the family to be handed down to posterity.

Dr Matthias Spalding sold the property to William Fletcher and by 1833 it had been owned by John Foster and then Joel Adams. (Joel Adams grandson Charles E.A. Bartlett was born here)

No doubt the frequent later changes in ownership were due to speculating in what was then an unusually fine property

In 1835 Joel Adams sold it to Thomas Moore who ran it as Lafayette ~~House~~ House. The bar room is still to be seen though now filled with the beautiful collection of antiques of the present owner (3) the widow of Mr Fred A Fiske. The bar is still preserved in the attic (4) of the house.

In April 1839 Mr & Mrs John Minot Fiske (Elizabeth Winn came to Chelmsford intending to buy the old house of his great grandfather Rev. Ebenezer Bridge (5) Mrs Fiske admires the Tavern where they were staying, The Lafayette House, and Mr Fiske bought the Tavern instead of the Bridge House for the summer home of the family (there were three sons)

The chaste rail fence now along the front of the house was built at that time. The place has since remained in the Fiske family (6).

Note: William Stoddard Bridge was the son of William Bridge son of Rev Ebenezer. John Minot's daughter Rachel was married to William Bridge, son of Rev Ebenezer Benjamin Fiske (see Fiske genealogy) married Elizabeth Bridge daughter of William and Rachel. John Minot Fiske married Elizabeth Winn. Benjamin Minot Fiske married Elizabeth Parkhurst daughter of Rev John Parkhurst and Celia Burrows.

Footnotes (1967) (1) Lowell St became Chelmsford St Billerica St now Billerica RD

(3) 1967-Eustace Fiske (4) Bar replaced in S W room in

(5) old house stood Littleton Rd just beyond Gas station
it was demolished to make way for enlargement of Chelmsford
Ginger Ale Co in now (1967) Purity Storage Bld.

(6) 1967 owned by Eustace Fiske son of Fred A Fiske



11/3/1937 A Haskell



11/3/1937 A Haskell

1 Billerica Rd.
Chelmsford

This house is in strong danger of being razed in the near future.

Due to rising taxes (18% rise due to reassessment and being placed in a commercial zone), noise, parking problems, vandalism, etc. the house is now on the market. The owners will accept any buyer, provided they have a year to relocate. They do not expect to sell it as a residence, due to the above problems. Once enthusiastic about its preservation, they are now completely discouraged. Due to its construction, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to move.

The following letter appeared in the Chelmsford Newsweekly in 1971. It describes the present situation, which has since become more urgent. The article was written in hopes that the town would buy the property: this was rejected at Town Meeting. The town finances are currently at a particularly low state.

"Board of Selectmen
Town Hall
Chelmsford, Mass.

Gentlemen:

The Town of Chelmsford faces the danger of losing one of its most valuable and cherished landmarks. The 'Fiske House' at Central Square. Here stands a New England monument, rich with early American history and a choice example of Colonial architecture.

It is believed that at some point in the not too distant future, the present owners, and occupants, Eustace and Nancy Fiske, will discontinue the use of the property as a private residence. Not only is this a large house and grounds for two people to maintain, the center of town has become an extremely noisy and congested place in which to live. It is understood that neither of the Fiske's two daughters are interested in taking over the property for their residence. Perhaps even more significant is the knowledge that this property is such a high cost.

At this point, it becomes sheer conjecture as to what will happen and when. I,agine the outrage that would develop if 'The Fiske House' were to be razed to make way for a new business establishment. How disgusting an idea that something so valuable to us all might be destroyed to make way for a gas station, a dry cleaner or a fast food operation.

When the Fiskes or their heirs decide to dispose of this property, they will most certainly look for the highest price that the market will bear. This is as it should be. In no way should they be expected to maintain this property for our enjoyment, nor should they be expected to sacrifice a portion of its value to enhance the citizens of Chelmsford and succeeding generations.

The problem is ours. I believe the town should acquire the Fiske land and buildings at the earliest possible date for three very important uses.

The first and most obvious, is the preservation of "The Fiske House". The second is to provide a proper site for a future new library, and the third is to provide space for much needed off street parking.

The urgency of the first has already been outlined. If

acquired, the house could be put to any one of many constructive uses, such as a museum, town office space, meeting rooms, etc., or leased to an organization who might properly maintain it.

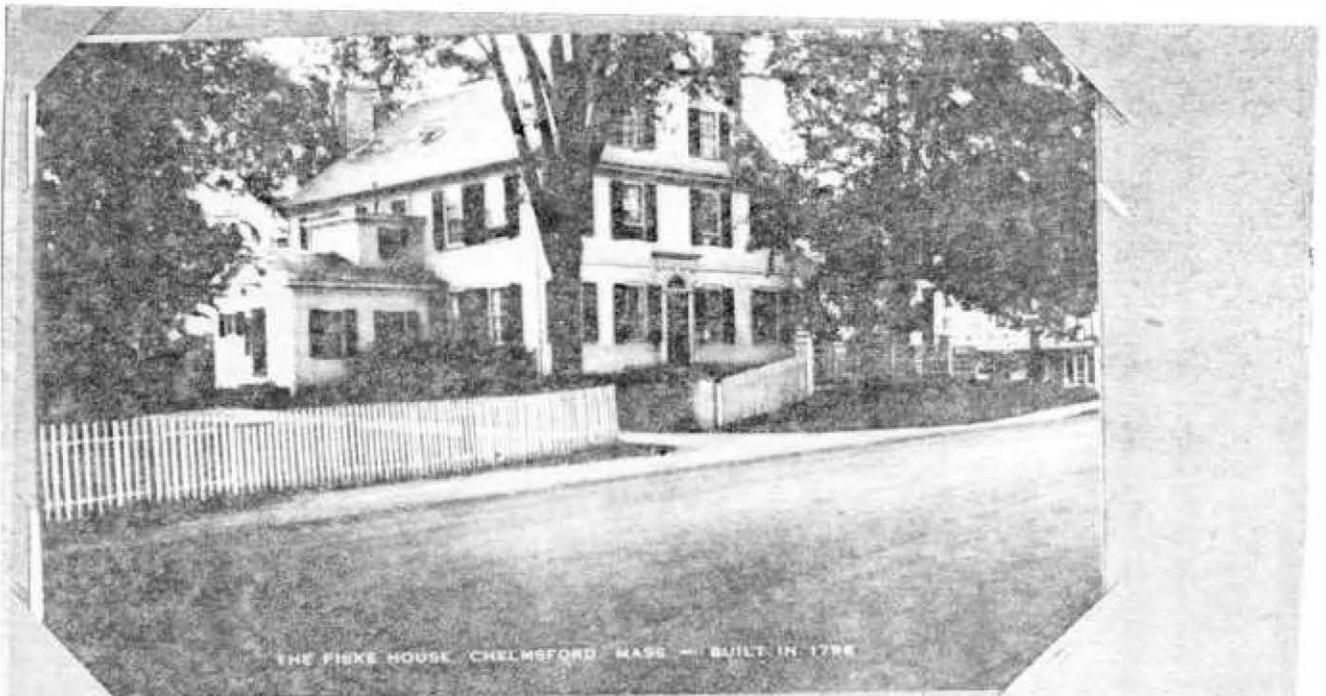
The wisdom of the second - future library site - seems more than logical. There is a committee that is currently studying library needs, and which has already recommended the acquisition of land just outside of Central Square. That site was turned down at a town meeting, probably because of high land cost and heavy traffic congestion. The Fiske Land contains in excess of 3 acres, would allow adequate area for a new library, set well back from the street, with access from both Central Square and Billerica Rd. Such a location would be most convenient for walkers or anyone shopping in the Central Square district. This would also be a step in the right direction toward rehabilitating the old business area.

The need for off-street parking has been acknowledged many times, but a proper solution has yet to be found. A portion of the Fiske Land has often been suggested as the only solution. This undertaking by itself however, is probably prohibitive. The land taking would be very expensive, not only for the actual land acquired but also the damage that might be attributed to the land and buildings not taken. This parking area, would be so laid out as to serve the library, the business district and visitors to the 'Fiske House.'

The simple answer is that the town should own it all. The three objectives outlined are imperative. The cost may be high, but to accomplish the three goals singularly may be nearly three times as high.

I propose that your board explore this matter thoroughly among yourselves, with other town committees that would be involved and with the owners of the property, with whom I have not discussed this proposal, nor do I represent them in any way.

Yours truly,"



THE FISKE HOUSE, CHELMSFORD, MASS. - BUILT IN 1796

Chelmsford Newsweekly
December 22, 1977

Restaurant Is Proposed For The Fiske House

Once again the future of the Fiske House is being discussed. On December 12, there was a public hearing before the Board of Health at which Mr. Wesley Owens proposed a beef and seafood restaurant for the Fiske House. Mr. Owens said that he plans to retain the original layout of the house as much as possible. The Board explained that the septic system at the House is insufficient for a restaurant, so no decision can be made until a deep water test can be done in March. By that time, Mr. Owens will present complete plans for a revised septic system.

22 High Street

A second hearing was held

December 12. Mr. Stavros presented plans to rebuild a house at 22 High Street. Before the house burned, the Board had notified the owners that the septic system was faulty, therefore, Mr. Stavros plans to put in a new septic system. The Board advised him that, before his plans can be accepted, he will need to have a deep water test done in the spring.

As a result of this hearing, the Board members decided that they will ask the Building Inspector to notify them any time someone applies for a permit to rebuild a home, in case there is a faulty septic system.

Fiske House License Given Green Light

Three members of Chelmsford's Board of Selectmen voted at Monday night's meeting to release the hold placed two weeks ago on issuing a liquor license to Rosario Turco, President of Fiske House, Inc. The release allows Turco to proceed with plans to open a restaurant in Chelmsford's historic landmark.

Agreeing to lift the hold were Selectmen William Murphy, Paul Hart, and Philip Currier. Selectman Arnold Lovering was opposed. Selectman Joseph Shanahan, Jr. abstained from voting. The State Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission will be notified of the Board's decision.

Turco's application for a liquor license had originally been approved in mid-January. At that time, several restrictions had been imposed on Fiske House, Inc. and certain conditions had to be complied with before the license would be given. One of these conditions was that a two-year contract be signed between Fiske House, Inc. and Wesley M. Owen, the restaurant's proposed manager. Inasmuch as Rosario Turco is without restaurant experience and Wesley Owen was reputed to have considerable expertise in this field, the Board felt it was an important condition and would assure consistent management of the business for a specified period of time.

At a public hearing on the application, Owen was described as the man for the job. His past association with the famed Blue Strawberry Restaurant in Portsmouth, N.H. was listed as a credential and presented as proof of his capabilities.

Two weeks ago the Board was made aware of alleged inconsistencies in Mr. Owen's background. His former employer, The Blue Strawberry, Inc., suggested in a letter that Owen's association with them had been less involved than the Board had been led to believe. It was decided to hold on issuing the liquor license until the matter could be clarified.

At Monday night's meeting with the Board were Rosario Turco, Wesley Owen, and Turco's attorneys, Mr. James Geary and Mr. Paul Killian. Prior to the meeting the Board had received a resume of Owen's background along with a letter in which Owen responds to Gene Brown, President of The Blue Strawberry, Inc. Owen stated in his letter, "I earnestly feel I am fully capable and qualified to undertake the Fiske House project, as does my employer, Rosario Turco. The ultimate judge of my ability will be the public acceptance of this restaurant."

Selectman Murphy was not satisfied with the resume. He felt it did not "jibe" with information presented at the hearing. Owen was said to have been employed at The Blue Strawberry for one year, said Murphy, with a total of seven years in the restaurant business. The resume showed that much of this work was on a part-time basis during Owen's high school years. Murphy said that part-time jobs didn't count, that since leaving the University of N.H. in 1976 Owen has actually only worked one and a half years full-time.

Atty. Geary insisted that his responses at the hearing to questions about Owen's background were not inconsistent with the facts. His review of the minutes of that hearing confirmed

this, he said. Geary said that he would be happy to listen to the tapes, however.

After some further discussion it was agreed that Murphy and Geary did not share the same interpretation of what was said at the hearing.

Selectman Lovering asked Rosario Turco what had been involved in the process of selecting Owen as manager of the proposed Fiske House Restaurant. Turco replied that Owen had been referred by friends and approved by Killian and Geary.

Somewhat upset, Atty. Killian called Gene Brown's letter a "cheap shot at publicity for the Blue Strawberry." He described it

as "libelous" and had warned against printing it, he said. Killian pointed out that his client had thus far invested some \$15,000. in the Fiske House restaurant. He said that he, Turco, and Geary were totally satisfied with the work

Owen has done to date.

"This is a serious venture" concluded Killian, "we're not trying to pull a sham on the town. Either you want the restaurant or you don't. We can't proceed if you continually call us in to answer innuendos. Brown's not here to support the charges." Killian then indicated that his client was having enough difficulty meeting the restrictions imposed by the Board when it awarded the license. One of the restrictions Killian was referring to was the one imposing a limit of no more than 24 people in the restaurant's downstairs waiting lounge. A facility accommodating 60 people had been planned.

Geary asked that the Board allow the public to be the ultimate judge of Owen's abilities. If he isn't capable, said Geary, he is out of a job. Turco is out of an investment, and the First Bank and Trust (owner of the Fiske House) are out of a tenant.

Selectman Murphy moved release of the liquor license hold saying he was concerned that every applicant be treated the same way. "I am sure," he said, "that other liquor licenses have been awarded with far less delving into but I do not believe we have been unfair in this instance." He had no objections, he said, to releasing the hold. Hart seconded his motion.

Mr. Owen's resume presented to the Selectmen just prior to this

week's meeting furnishes the following information as to his background of education and experience:

After graduation from Oyster River High School, Durham, N.H., in 1973, he attended the University of New Hampshire at Keene, N.H.

1973-74. During the period Sept. 1973-May 1974, he held the positions of Kitchen Manager, Breakfast and Preparation Cook at the American Restaurant Association in Keene. From May, 1974, to September, 1974, he was Assistant Dining Room Manager and waiter at the Wharf Restaurant, Monterey, California.

He attended the University of New Hampshire in Durham, 1974-76. His area of emphasis was

Schools of Liberal Arts, Public Administration/Political Science. During the period September, 1974-July, 1975, he was employed at the Eagle Lair Restaurant, Wakefield, N.H. as general manager, kitchen manager, and cook. From July, 1975-April, 1977, he held an administrative position with Strafford County, Dover, N.H.

For the five months from January-June, 1977, he held positions of management training, bartender and waiter at The Blue Strawberry, Inc., Portsmouth, N.H., and from June-November, 1977, he was manager of The Blue Strawberry's restaurant in Memphis, Tenn., the Lee-Fontaine Carriage House.

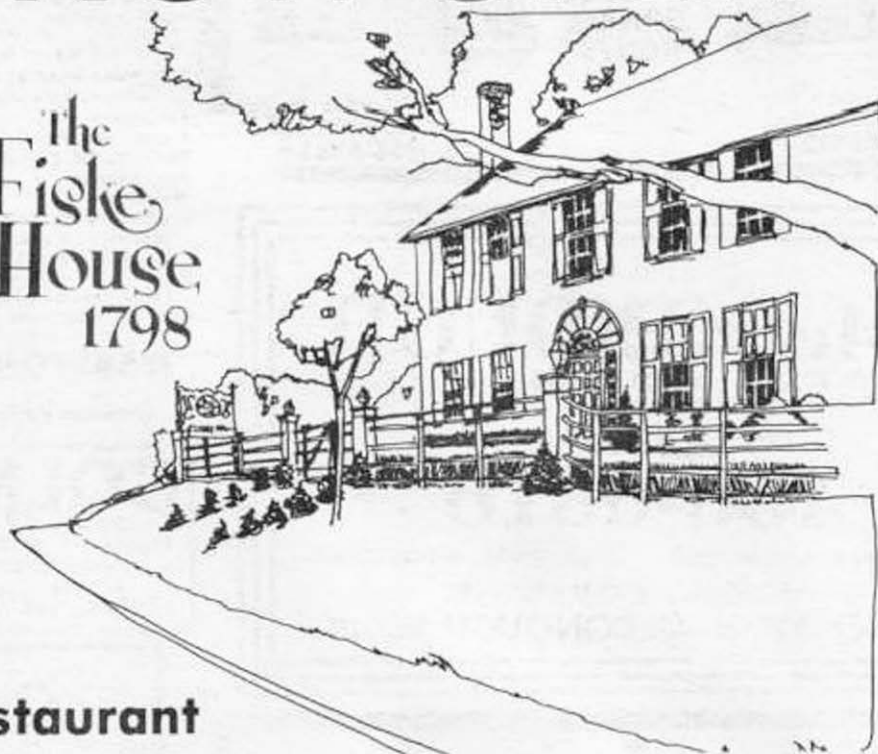
Earlier, he had been employed (June 1972-September, 1973) at the Bittersweet Restaurant, Wolfeboro, N.H. as bartender, waiter and cook; from September, 1971-June, 1972, he held a kitchen utility position at University of New Hampshire Food Services, Durham.

Mr. Owen commented in the resume: "I began working in Restaurants part-time while still being in Jr. High School. These jobs included work as kitchen utility, preparation, bus boy, grille cook, etc. The actual working dates varied because of school commitments and local working hours." This employment was at two restaurants in Manchester, N.H.

The resume concluded with Mr. Owen's statement that he is "enthusiastic about finally entering a more meaningful and permanent place of employment."

NOW OPEN

The
Fiske
House
1798



Restaurant

"An Historical Dining Experience"

**One Billerica Road
Chelmsford
256-4464**

Open Daily - 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Sunday Brunch - 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**Most Major
Credit Cards
Accepted**



HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CHELMSFORD, MASS. 01824

January 15, 1979

Ms. Candance Jenkins
National Register Coordinator
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Ma. 02108

Dear Ms. Jenkins

It is with extreme regret that the Chelmsford Historical Commission reports that the Fiske House, 1 Billerica Road, Chelmsford, sustained serious fire damage on the evening of December 30, 1978. The structure has been listed in the National Register since December 9, 1977.

The fire apparently started in an attic dining room and the most serious damage occurred to the roof. On the west side, (facade) the roof covering is completely burned away, with the east side only about one-third gone, along the ridge. All the roof structural members are still intact, although they indicate considerable charring. On both the north and south ends, the siding under the ridge has been burned down to the tops of the attic windows. On the facade, the first four windows (from north to south) on the upper story are completely without sash. The rest of the windows are intact, with some glass breakage.

All the chimneys show no damage and all of the salient exterior architectural features, except for the damage described above, are intact.

Interior fire damage appears to be confined to the attic and the north end of the second floor. Water damage, of course, was considerable.

Fire officials believe that the building is still structurally sound. Mr. Edward Redstone, the owner, has indicated to me that he is hopeful that the building can be restored, and that he will not know whether a Historic Preservation Grant will be applied for, until insurance settlement is reached.

LET THE CHILDREN GUARD WHAT THE SIRE'S HAVE WON

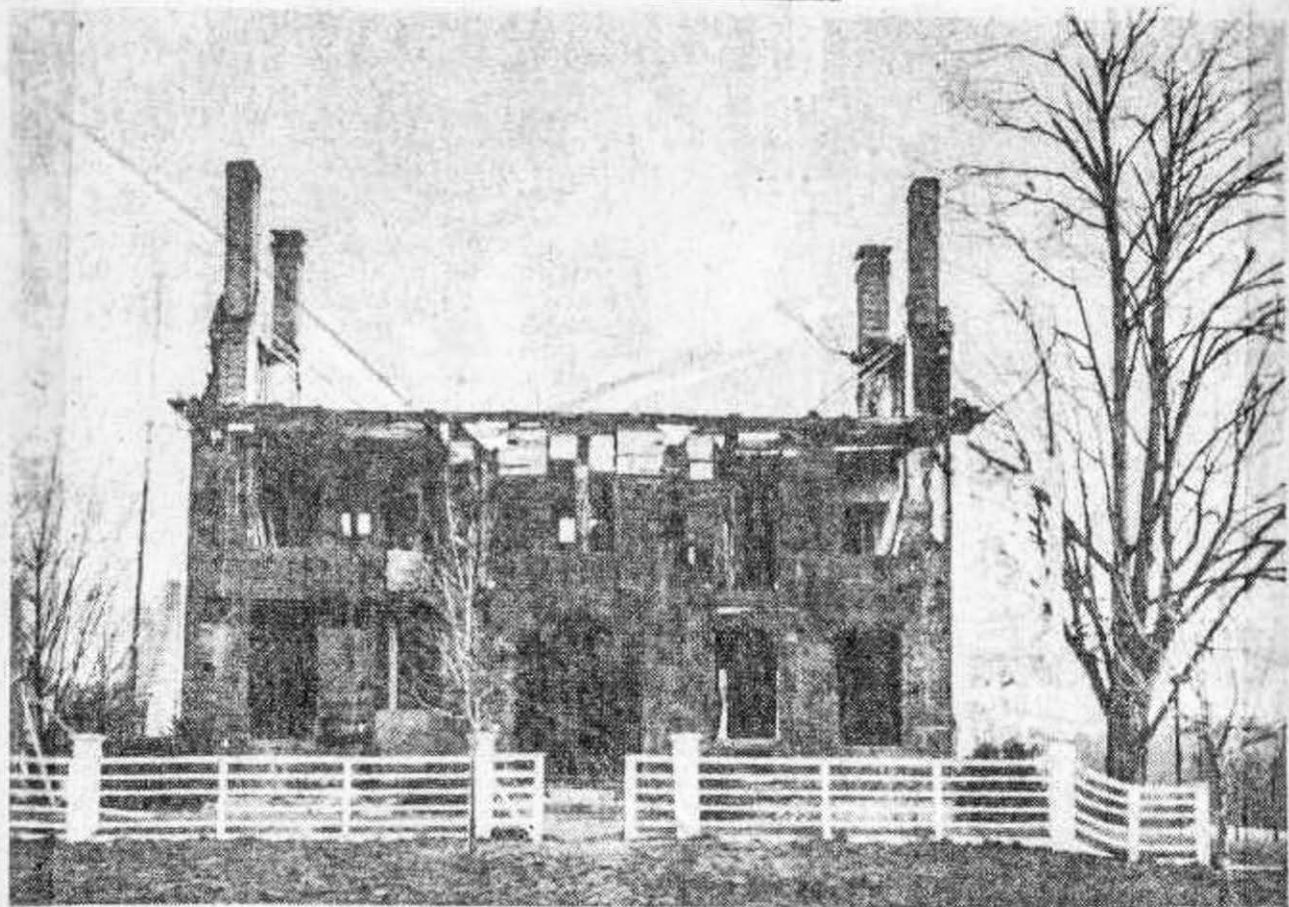


Reconstruction on the way

The fire-ravaged Fiske House in Chelmsford Center is on its

way to reconstruction as the First Bank and Trust Co., the building's owner, has retained

an architect to devise plans for the rebuilding job.



Under repair

Sun Staff photo by David Brow

Work continues to restore the historic Fiske House in Chelmsford Center which

was heavily damaged by fire nearly a year ago. The siding has now been removed from the exterior of

the building. For a few short months the building served as a restaurant.



Published by R. W. Emerson

Fiske House, Chelmsford Center, Mass.

Postcard courtesy of Paul Pettazoni



Postcard courtesy of Paul Pettazoni



FISKE HOUSE
1798

Built By
Simeon Spaulding
Chelmsford Merchant

HALL, FINNEGAN,
AHERN & DESCHENES, P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



LEFT TURN
YIELD
ON GREEN



110 EAST
LOWELL
LAWRENCE





7/25/2004 F. Merriam



7/28/2004 F. Merriam



7/29/2004 F. Merriam



7/30/2004 F. Merriam





12/28/2004 F. Merriam



FISKE HOUSE
COMMERCIAL BANKING CENTER