Stone Silo Farm - 42 Carlisle Rd, Harvard, MA

History and Timeline

1700----+----------+----------1800+-------+----------1900-------+----------+--2000----
Heald Heald Brown Nickless Marshall Ambrose/Davis

Historic House -- the Georgian saltbox house is considered to have been built in 1743 (1735 in some records) by Deacon John Heald (1639-1775), the first elected selectman of Acton and a deacon at Acton's first church. Far from town, the builders created a secret alcove in the stone foundation basement to protect against hostile native Americans.

The barn and stone silo are thought to have been built at the same time. Deacon John's son, Lieutenant John Heald, lived in the house from 1762-1800. Timothy Brown (1800) and John Nickless (1800s) were the successive owners. Surviving to this day are the original saltbox foundation, dining room, parlor, front bedrooms, front staircase, and kitchen fireplace, complete with warming oven.

20th Century Stewardship -- the property, along with some 125 acres, was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. W. Lawrence Marshall, Jr in the 1930s. The Marshalls carefully updated the saltbox colonial and built two additions: a servants' wing on the north side, including a kitchen, laundry room, ensuite maid quarters, and second story bathroom and closet to create a primary bedroom suite upstairs. In the rear a two-story gambrel wing was added, lying perpendicular to the original saltbox. The first floor featured a great room, open to the original kitchen fireplace, and half bath.

The second floor housed two additional bedrooms and full bath. Unique features include woodstove hook-up, antique Dutch door, secret compartments over the fireplace and in the parlor, and unique wide paneling made from reclaimed boards recovered from the Woodstock Inn in Vermont. The barn is thought to have been rebuilt in the 1950s on the original foundation, and the Marshalls installed a spiral staircase and 2nd floor studio in the stone silo. Surrounding the house with apple and cherry trees made the Marshall residence a regular stop on the springtime Acton apple blossom tours in the 1960s.

Stone Silo Farm -- William Ambrose and Amy Davis purchased the property in 1993 with 7+ acres. Initial renovations, undertaken by Jeff Adams (J. W. Adams Construction) of Concord MA, included updating all electrical and plumbing, kitchen renovation in servants wing, updating primary bedroom bath, and refinishing floors. Other improvements of the property in subsequent years included new stalls in the lower barn, expanded horse paddock, renovated and insulated studio in the silo, rebuilt chicken coop, in-ground pool and fencing, paddle tennis court, and installation of flower gardens in front and side of house and a vegetable garden off the barn.

A second major renovation and addition occurred in 2004-2005, undertaken by Halsey Platt (Platt Builders) of Groton MA, earning the builder a national award (Chrysalis Awards for Remodeling Excellence) for best addition over $250,000.

The architect's description:

At the former back of the house, a new "barn" addition now houses an open kitchen and breakfast area. Composed as a balance and book-end to the original saltbox form, the addition's volume seeks to express the organic growth typical of a New England farmhouse passed through successive generations. The barn is joined to the living room by means of a new entry that is now the home's primary access. At the hub of the reoriented house, a covered "farmer's porch" shelters the entry and helps to gather the elongated composite facade with a human-scaled focus and a low horizontal gesture to the still bucolic landscape. The 18th century house proudly addressed the road but turned its side to the fields. The 20th-century house sneaks a peek at the landscape, while maintaining respect for the road. Now, in the 21st-century, while preserving a dignified facade to the public, the house has bloomed toward the fields and addresses the landscape with a humble vernacular grace.

Apart from the expansive country kitchen and bath on the ground floor, the addition included renovation of the second floor of the gambrel wing to create a new primary bedroom with views of the property, a new primary bathroom, upstairs laundry, and access to the kitchen loft with many uses including exercise space, gaming center and/or office. The existing kitchen was converted to an office. Cedar roofing was replaced over most of the house. The original screened porch was relocated poolside and built out as a entertainment space, known as 'the doghouse'.

A third renovation was completed in 2011 to update the upstairs bathrooms and the guest suite and bath, to replace the barn, cupola, and stone silo roofs, to replace the windows and add radiant heat in the silo, and to add sliding doors on the north side of the barn opening to a deck overlooking the property.

Subsequent work included new, higher capacity copper gutters, cedar roof replacement on South exposure and utility room in 2019, and insulation of the attic ceiling in 2016. New oil tanks were installed in the basement in 2024. In 2025 about 75-80% of the roof was replaced with red cedar shingles, including copper drip edges and valleys.

Unique Property Features

- a rare sized Georgian saltbox colonial dating to 1743 with original rooms and kitchen fireplace, original stone foundation including a secret alcove to hide from intrusions, and unique details amongst the 7 fireplaces, secret compartments, and antique doors and fixtures.

- a working farm featuring a boarded horse (Chloe), an active chicken coop, an apiary in the back field, extensive raspberry and blackberry patches (cultivated and wild), small apple orchard, large vegetable garden, kitchen herb gardens, and recently planted and productive peach and pear trees.

- a recreation center consisting of swimming pool and pool house (ping pong, darts) in the summer, platform tennis court for the winter, indoor and outdoor basketball hoops, running track around the field (1/4 mi) and walking trails in abutting conservation land.

- unique office/studio in the first and second floors of the stone silo adjacent to the barn, featuring radiant heat under both floors, updated casement windows with screens, and beautiful views of the property.

- spacious layout inside offering multiple seating areas, two dining areas, a dedicated office, a multi-use kitchen loft (exercise, gaming, office), extensive bookcases and reading areas, and an expansive country kitchen that serves as entertaining space, family room, and informal entry.

- income producing opportunities include boarding horses in the barn, selling produce, and potentially creating a rental unit or caretaker/in-law quarters by walling off the office/guest suite wing and adding a kitchenette in the utility room.

- an opportunity to sell an ANR building lot of 4 acres that would consist of the back field with deeded access via the driveway at the neighboring 36 Carlisle Road residence.

Property Features -- Stone Silo Farm 42 Carlisle Road

<u>Farmhouse Kitchen</u>
- custom cabinetry from Platt Builders
- Vermont slate countertops
- white porcelain farmhouse sink
- custom glass cabinet w/ outside window using original butler pantry glass doors
- pitch pine flooring milled to order in Groton MA
- Dual-fuel Viking range and hood
- new GE Monogram refrigerator installed in Sep 2023
- new Bosch dishwasher installed in Jan 2024
- water purifier installed in 2023
- true divided-light double paned Pella windows and doors throughout
- radiant heating

<u>Great Room</u>
- wide wainscoting recovered from Woodstock Inn fire in early 1930s
- wide pine flooring installed 1930s
- original 1743 kitchen fireplace on south end of room w/ secret compartment above mantle
- woodstove hook-up on north end of room (not in use)
- custom window seat built in 1930s, new copper roofing replaced in 2011
- bar sink featuring slate countertop and custom cabinets using original paneling

18th Century Parlor and Dining Room
• original saltbox house
• original flooring, paneling and corner built-in hutch
• original fireplaces in each (not used)
• hidden panel storage in parlor

Primary Bedroom Suite and Loft
• East and West views overlooking the property
• custom window seats w/ storage and cathedral ceiling built in 2005 renovation
• true divided-light double paned Pella windows
• original light sconces and hardware from early 20th century
• fireplace built in 1930s as part of great room/bedroom wing
• new bathroom w/ marble tile and radiant heat in 2005
• opens to loft overlooking kitchen w/ radiant heat, carpet

Original Upstairs Bedrooms
• original saltbox house
• original flooring, paneling
• original fireplaces in each (not used)
• updated in-suite and hallway bathrooms

First Floor Office
• custom built-in desks and shelves
• under-mounted heaters
• pitch pine flooring milled to order in Groton MA
• custom storm windows facing street

First Floor Guest Suite
• custom cathedral ceiling w/ upper storage/play area (access through upstairs bedroom closet)
• new tiled shower
• original early 20th century sink

Attic and Basement
• new attic insulation 2016
• new oil tanks in basement 2024