

526 AYRAULT ROAD

Abutting the Brambleridge subdivision, just west of Perinton Center Cemetery, sits a striking brick farmhouse flanked by an imposing red barn. The approximately seven acre property, with its creek, small wooded area behind the barn, and curved drive, has a park-like feel. Because this elegant property represents Perinton's agricultural past and is also connected with the town's pioneering families, the house, barn, and a portion of the property were recently designated as an historic landmark by the Town of Perinton.



The imposing two-story brick house, one of only a few brick farmhouses in Perinton (others are located on Carter Road and LaSalle Parkway), was probably built in the late 1840's or early 1850's. The front-gabled house has a fieldstone foundation, stone sills and lintels, an arched gabled front window, and a front door with round arched windows. The vernacular structure features both Greek Revival and Italianate influences.

Originally there were six chimneys which provided heat for the various rooms in the house. Only two are left. In addition most of the house has random planked pine flooring, which the current owners discovered when they tore up old carpeting. The two-course brick structure was built with no actual framing; the plaster walls were supported by furring strips that were attached to the bricks. Consequently there was little or no insulation, resulting in some very chilly, drafty winters. At the rear of the house there might have been a summer kitchen and also possibly a multiple-seat indoor privy.

The three-bay front façade is in the Greek Revival tradition while the original two porches, on the east and south, both have Italianate posts and brackets. Sometime in the earlier decades of the 20th century, the south porch was removed and the east porch was rebuilt, using similar detailing. The house also has two rear wings.

Next to the house is a magnificent gambrel-roofed barn with a gabled east wing. The structure is banked into the slope that runs down to the creek. The barn is unique to Perinton for its size and for its location, which is to the side rather than to the rear of the house. The major part of the barn has a fieldstone foundation and was probably built in the 1860's, while the front gable of the barn was most likely built at a later date because it has a brick foundation. There are two large doors on the west side, decoratively painted, one door on the east side, and a door centered in the brick foundation on the south side. The siding is, appropriately, painted barn red. Centered on the gambrel roof is a square cupola with louvered openings, a cross-gabled roof, a finial, and a running horse weathervane.

The house was probably built by George Neiss who owned the property from about 1845 to 1858. He lived there with his wife Eve and their five children. The Caleb J. Wood family farmed the 75 acre parcel from 1858 through the 1870's, and probably

built the barn. From the turn of the 20th century until the 1940's, the Fred Moss family farmed the land. The property remained as farmland until the mid 20th century when it was sold for development to O'Brien builders, leaving the seven acres that remain today.

Current owners Mike and Kim Millow have lived in the house since July 1974. They comment that the house needed a tremendous amount of work when they moved in. In fact their children were asked if they lived in the barn since the house itself was so overgrown. The house, which had been vacant, had a leaky roof, and with no insulation was open to winter winds, especially around the windows. Over the last nearly 30 years, the Millows have, among other improvements, added insulation, replaced the heating and wiring systems and some of the ceilings, put in new windows, refinished much of the pine flooring, and remodeled the kitchen and bathrooms.

Despite the hard work that comes with owning an old house, the owners remember fondly the enjoyment their four children had with the barn and the land. All were members of 4H and raised chickens, goats, pigs, sheep, and even cattle as club projects. The St. John's of Rochester first graders regularly came to visit the barn and tour the property. Adults who knew the property as children have enjoyed coming back to reminisce, and both photographers and painters enjoy the wonderful images of land, house, and barn.

Even though the property, with its house, barn, stream, trees, and surrounding land, is surrounded by suburban development, its location on an Ayrault Road rise maintains the ambiance of a rural and agricultural past. Mike and Kim Millow feel especially fortunate to have had the opportunity to enjoy this property and to maintain and restore the home, the barn, and the land. They would like to be able to pass on to future generations this intact piece of Perinton's agricultural heritage.