

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area
109, 111-113 Y

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Massachusetts Archives Building
Boston, MA 02125

Town: Groton

Place: Groton Center

Photographs

X *See continuation sheet*

Name of Area: Groton Center

Current Use: Residential/ funerary/commemorative/
agricultural/educational/commercial/industrial

Construction Dates or Period: c. 1660-1970

Overall Condition: Good-excellent

Major Intrusions and Alterations: Approximately four
commercial buildings; few modern materials

Acreage: Approximately 100

Sketch Map

X *See continuation sheet*

Recorded by: Sanford Johnson

Organization: Groton Historical Commission

Date (Month/Year): 10/06

AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

Introduction

The Groton Center Area comprises a linear village located along Main Street between Old Ayer Road and West Street and includes Court Street, Station Avenue, School Street, Elm Street, Powderhouse Road and parts of Broadmeadow Road, Lowell Road, Pleasant Street, Court Street, Station Avenue and Hollis Street. The south boundary is the southern side of the property at 14 Main Street and the north end is at the north side of the house at 280 Main Street. The east and west sides are the rear of the lots along Main Street, Broadmeadow Road and Powderhouse Road. The village, which is 36 miles west of Boston, consists largely of Federal Period residences with other styles represented including the Greek Revival, Classical Revival, Victorian Eclectic and Colonial. Many of the residences have been adapted for use as commercial properties. Wood frame and some brick construction, usually of two and one half stories with side gabled roofs, is typical although larger buildings of brick do exist. A great deal of the center's character is derived from the well-preserved houses, many with outbuildings, arranged among similarly scaled commercial, institutional and civic buildings along the broad main street of the town. It is the town's densest collection of historic resources and retains strong associations with the residential, educational, civic and commercial history. Buildings on the campus of The Lawrence Academy will be covered to some degree while the school in its entirety will be the subject of a future MHC Area Form.

Development

Groton was founded in 1655 by residents from Woburn, Boston and elsewhere as one of the state's westernmost frontier towns. Disputes with Native Americans culminated in the burning of the town in 1676 and persisted into the 18th century, slowing the settlement process begun around the corner of Hollis and Main Streets. Subsequent agricultural activity proved successful and allowed local farmers to prosper, encouraging the founding of the Groton Academy (later Lawrence Academy) in 1792 and, by the 19th century, the construction of numerous estate-quality village residences that continue to lend the center a highly refined appearance.

The town center expanded south along Main Street during the 19th century and diversified from an entirely agricultural village into a regional commercial and cultural focus. Early 20th century growth took place, although in small proportion to earlier development, leaving the Main Street Area with the appearance of a Federal and Early Industrial Period town lined along a modern thoroughfare. Due to local historic preservation legislation put in place in the 1960s, Groton Center is more well-preserved in relation to other town centers in northern Middlesex County. The vast majority of buildings are contributing elements and continue to associate the area with its historic trends of development. The area retains much of the appearance it had during the early 20th century.

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Streetscapes

Main Street is the spine of the Groton Center Area and is the location of approximately 64 properties, most of which are residential although several commercial, institutional and civic buildings exist. The road was established as a county route in the 17th century in order to connect the town of Chelmsford with the Nashua River and southern New Hampshire. While early residences existed along Main Street at that time, they were later replaced with the more substantial buildings we see today. Some early buildings not deemed worthy of a Main Street address were not demolished but removed and survive today on Broadmeadow Road and elsewhere, usually in altered states. Among buildings in Groton Center, houses on Main Street are more likely to have larger lots, exhibit a higher quality of design and level of preservation than houses on side streets such as Court Street and Station Avenue. The village's commercial and civic activity has taken place principally along this thoroughfare, thereby attracting as residents local people of means.

The older buildings on Main Street were built in the 18th century and are located closer to the south end. The Dix House at **117 Main Street** (MHC #13) was built c. 1780. The hipped roof and brick construction are unusual in Groton Center. The south half of the Groton Inn at **130 Main Street** (MHC #11, NR IND, 1976) was built during the late 1700s and enlarged more than once after that time. The house at **134 Main Street** (MHC #10) is of a similar scale to the inn and appears to have been built around the same time, c. 1780, and to have undergone additions to the side of the original side gabled plan. The most intact and well designed 18th century building in the center is the Dana House at **86 Main Street** (MHC #23). The refined ornament and elevated site lend prominence to the house that is now housing for Lawrence Academy teachers. It is a 5x3-bay, ridge-hipped, 2 1/2-story building with a 2-story ell attached to the east (rear). Ornamental features consist of the slim corner boards, beltcourse, highly articulated cornice with modillions and dentils, symmetrical fenestration in the façade and the gabled central pavilion. The west-facing center entry has a classical surround consisting of a pediment, fanlight and pilasters. Granite curbs, posts, steps and two earthen stepped terraces are integrated into the hill that elevates the house above the road. The house is located close to Main Street on the Lawrence Academy campus, the owner of the building and is just south of the First Parish Church, perhaps the most conspicuous residential location in the town center. The house at **153 Main Street** (MHC #7) may have been built during the 17th century and exhibits a similar 2 1/2-story, 5x2-bay, side gabled plan, although it is oriented south rather than toward the street. The early construction date is based on the discovery of apparently original stone infill in a wall during a recent repair and on an inspection in the 1960s by the historian Abbott Lowell Cummings who found outsized beams, larger than average chimney base and flared corner posts.

Examples of buildings on Main Street from the first half of the 19th century include the house at 80 Main Street which exhibits elements of the Federal and Greek Revival styles and was built c. 1850. The 2 1/2-story, side-gabled, 5x4-bay form is articulated with a classical entry surround with transom and sidelights as well as a heavily molded frieze at the eaves. The Kilbourn House at **95 Main Street** (MHC #16) was built c. 1820 in a Cape Cod form with Federal style detail. The 5x2-bay, side-gabled, 1 1/2-story plan has decorative features that include the symmetrical fenestration in the façade, corner boards and classical surround at the center entry

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that consists of pilasters, sidelights and entablature. The 1811 Luther Lawrence House at **164 Main Street (MHC #5)** is a 5x5-bay, 2-story, ridge-hipped, Federal style house built on a nearly square plan with a rear attachment of 2 stories that may be Colonial in origin and a 2-story carriage barn behind the addition. The numerous decorative features include the symmetrical fenestration in the façade, corner pilasters with molded caps and bases, molded cornice and four tall brick chimneys with inward tapering caps at the four corners of the main block. The center entry has a classical surround composed of a denticulated cornice, frieze and architrave, pilasters flanking the door and a fanlight above. Distinctive shutters with quarter-round tops have been applied to the entry. A modest example from the period is the house at **187 Main Street (MHC #2)**, built c. 1800, which is a 1 1/2-story, front-gabled, 5x2-bay form with gabled and shed dormers on both roof slopes. Federal and Greek Revival style details include the molded cornice, symmetrical fenestration in the façade, gable returns and corner boards. A detached garage built c. 1950 is in the side yard. The c.1833 Needham House at **208 Main Street (MHC #138)** is a large 5x4-bay, 2 1/2-story, side-gabled form with elements of the Greek Revival style, a center entrance, triple hung windows on the ground floor and an open porch across the full width of the south facing principal elevation that looks onto the intersection of Main and Hollis Streets. A rear ell may have functioned as a carriage house at one time.

Buildings from the second half of the 19th century include the house and detached carriage barn at 71 Main Street, both of which demonstrate Victorian details. The 4x2-bay, 2 1/2-story, side gambrel house has gable returns, prominent window hoods, a wrap-around porch and a steeply pitched gabled dormer on the front slope of the roof. The barn has similar molded eave trim, a gambrel roof and a highly ornate rolling vehicle door in the façade. The Dr. Joshua Green House at **154 Main Street (MHC #8)** was built in 1851 in the Italianate style with heavily bracketed eaves, substantial corner pilasters and window hoods. The house has an unusual four-bay façade, is set back from Main Street farther than most others and has a larger than average parcel which enhance the view from the street. The Governor Boutwell House at **172 Main Street (MHC #4)** is across Main Street from the Town Hall and bears a strong similarity to the Dr. Green House, perhaps due to the fact that they were both built in 1851. The bracketed eaves, prominent quoins and first floor windows of extended length highlight the exterior. A modern shed exists in the rear of the house. The Congregational Church Parsonage at 274 Main Street is a Second Empire style design from 1874 with bays on the façade and both sides. The bell-shaped Mansard roof has two dormers on each slope and slate shingles applied in a fish scale pattern. The former Milo Shattuck Store, located at 235 Main Street, was built c. 1860 and owned by the resident of 20 Pleasant Street. Paneled corner pilasters and heavy molded eave trim distinguish the store as one of a few historic commercial properties in the area. The ell at the south side is a later addition but the exterior has been clad in wood clapboards so that it reacts well with the older wood clapboard building.

Twentieth century construction in Groton Center appears in a variety of forms, including a Queen Anne example at 77 Main Street, called Loomis House by the owner, the Lawrence Academy. Built c. 1910, it is the only house in the area with a conical roofed corner tower. The slate shingled roof, canted corners with jigsaw brackets and the large roof dormers further distinguish the house which separates Main Street from the Lawrence Academy athletic fields. The detached carriage barn has wood shingle and clapboard siding, brackets at the eaves, a gabled dormer on the front slope of the slate roof and a pyramidal ventilator. The house at 176 Main Street was built in 1904 with cobblestone walls and Shingle style wood frame construction

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above - a unique combination of materials in Groton Center. The Charles Bancroft Memorial stone gateway consists of cobblestone walls with cut granite capstones, cobblestone piers at the driveway and separates the house, called Shawfieldmont, from Main Street. Views from the back of the house, as in many houses on this side of Main Street between Lowell Road and Hollis Street, take in Gibbet Hill, a drumlin cleared in the Colonial Period of trees that still serves as pasture for Black Angus cows. Modern construction exists at 140 Main Street which is a vinyl sided hardware store built c. 1995, a strip mall at 127 Main Street built in the 1950s, a brick grocery store at 240 Main Street built in the 1960s and a wood frame bank at 171 Main Street that was built c. 1970.

Houses located off Main Street are usually more modest in scale, spaced closer together and have more restrained design qualities. For example, the west end of Broadmeadow Road is the site of seven historic houses although only two are more than 1 ½ stories tall. Four of these are Cape Cod houses built c. 1800 and were likely moved c. 1890 to this site from their previous locations on Main Street. The houses at 18 and 16 Broadmeadow are said by a resident to be two halves of the same building that occupied the current site of the library at 99 Main Street. All have wood clapboard siding and lots that range from .1 to 1.3 acres. Two detached garages from the early 20th century have survived.

The four residences on Station Avenue are less well preserved than those on Main Street and tend to have vinyl siding and other modern materials. Some are built on a scale similar to the houses on Main Street such as 14 and 22 Station Avenue which are 2 ½ stories and are in use as multiple unit residences. The house at 11 Station Avenue is 1 1/2 stories and is typical of the side streets in Groton Center. This Greek Revival example is well preserved and has a detached garage from c. 1940. Commercial and industrial construction on Station Avenue consists of the Groton Electric Light Department office at 23 Station Avenue which is a stucco building from 1909 with elements of the Bungalow form which is unusual in Groton. The GELD plans to move out of its office in the near future. The large c. 1840 Greek Revival style former grain store at 28 Station Avenue is now in use as a multiple unit residence and has a detached barn built c. 1880. The Buckingham Bus Company office and part of its wood clapboard garage at 39 Station Avenue occupies another relatively large building for Groton Center and was the freight house for the former Worcester and Nashua Railroad. Station Avenue was first developed in 1849 just after completion of the railroad from South Groton, now Ayer, and was the site of freight buildings, the railroad station and other industrial uses.

Court Street was also built up just after the railroad came to Groton Center. The 14 buildings on Court Street resemble those on Station Avenue in their mixed use, higher density and somewhat reduced lot size compared to Main Street. Eleven of these buildings were built prior to c. 1870 and remain in fair to excellent condition. The house at 7 Court Street is a Victorian Eclectic style design of two stories and is clad in wood clapboards. This is also true of 11 Court Street (the Victorian design was probably a later development given the possibility that the core of the house was built c. 1740 for Colonel William Lawrence), 15, 16, 21 and 31 Court Street. Houses at 16 and 21 Court Street have attached barns built c. 1900 or before. Greek Revival style designs retain their wood cladding and exist at 20, 25 and 26 Court Street. A Gothic Revival style house occupies the parcel at 19 Court Street and those at 12 and 39 Court Street are Cape Cod houses. Industrial

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activity takes place at the fuel dealership at 36 Court Street which may have incorporated another former railroad storage building into the rear or northwest end of the property.

Pleasant Street was originally a route from Groton to Lancaster during the Colonial Period. The 22 houses here range in construction date from c. 1830-c. 1920 with the majority having been built in the mid 19th century. Among the finer designed houses in Groton Center is the former Milo Shattuck House at 20 Pleasant Street, built c. 1850 in the Victorian Eclectic style. The larger than average scale, attached 19th century barn and high level of architectural detail cause it to stand out among the houses on the street. Additional houses on the street from the Early Industrial Period include the Victorian Eclectic example at 32 Pleasant Street, the side gabled Greek Revival designs at 42 (house altered with Victorian bay windows, attached barn built c. 1900), 54 and 88 Pleasant Street, 1 ½ story Greek Revival houses at 53 and 79 Pleasant Street and larger 2 ½ story front gabled examples at 58 and 76 Pleasant Street. The c. 1860 Victorian Eclectic design at 73 Pleasant Street is a 2 ½-story, front-gabled form with a c. 1900 attached barn, both of which have a slate shingled roof which is unusual in Groton. Houses at 28, 29 (with c. 1900 detached barn) and 50 Pleasant Street have 2 ½ story Victorian designs. Post-industrial houses include those at 43 Pleasant (c. 1950) and 49 Pleasant (c.1940). This was the period when the side street off Pleasant called Adams Avenue after a former owner was built up and became the site of Bungalows and Colonial Revival designs from c. 1900-1950.

Elm Street was completed between Main and Pleasant in 1834 and is the site of 10 houses, nearly all of which were built before 1900 and those at 18, 21, 22-24 (which has an attached carriage barn), 25, and 28 built in the Federal and Greek Revival styles before c. 1850. Some Victorian and Modern construction also exists including the Victorian Eclectic style house and attached barn at 8-12 Elm Street and the Victorian Eclectic style house at 4 Elm Street with its multiple shingle patterns. The commercial building at 15 Elm Street is a one-story auto repair shop built of cast block in the early 20th century and later covered with brick facing on the façade. Like Court Street and Station Avenue, buildings on Elm Street have smaller parcels than those on Main Street and others in the core of the area.

School Street contains seven houses built between c. 1750 and c. 1930. A road parallel to the south side of School Street originally traversed the green area bordering the north side of the Old Burying Ground but between 1847 and 1875 was partially eliminated and the shorter right of way made to connect Main Street to School Street west of the burying ground. The oldest house is the two-story, wood clapboard Colonial style building at 8 School Street which, as a result of 19th century additions, has a cross gabled roof. The Classical Revival style house at 17 School Street is Groton's most refined Foursquare form and was built in the early 1900s. The carriage barn has a form that imitates the Foursquare plan of the house. The porch with its bas-relief in the tympanum is an unusual detail. The Federal style house at **25 School Street (MHC #33)** is a well preserved 2 ½-story, 5x4-bay example that has a refined entry surround with sidelights and, attached to the rear, a barn that has dimensions and an eave side entry that suggest a construction date in the 18th century which is rare for this region. Houses at 33 and 37 School Street were built c. 1850 in Cape Cod and Greek Revival styles respectively. Thirty-three School Street has an attached garage from c. 1930 and 37 School Street has a detached barn from c. 1900. Houses at 45 and 49 School Street were built between c. 1900 and c. 1920 in the Victorian Eclectic and Cape Cod styles respectively. The house at 45 School Street is in use as a

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funeral home and 49 has a large detached barn that may have been built c. 1900 although the barn doors have been replaced with modern overhead doors.

The south end of Hollis Street was among the earliest places of settlement in Groton and is densely built up with Colonial and later period houses, some of which have been adapted for commercial use. The route was established by Native Americans during the Contact Period for travelers headed north and was a natural place for European settlers to build. The Bradstreet Parsonage at **46 Hollis Street (MHC #29)** is one of Groton's oldest houses and was built in 1706. The principal elevation looks south and the gable end is toward the street. The building has been enlarged and altered but retains the wood clapboard exterior. The core of the former residence at **2-8 Hollis Street (MHC #25)** is a well-preserved wood clapboard Cape Cod house built c. 1770 near the corner of Main Street which was enlarged with rear additions and modern outbuildings during the 20th century and is now professional offices. A second 18th century house is the c. 1780 example at **20 Hollis Street (MHC #26)** and is a 5x2-bay, 2-story form with a rear addition from the 19th century and has also been adapted for commercial use. It is distinguished from its later neighbors by its relatively low corner post height. There are approximately 11 houses that were built between Main Street and School Street during the first half of the 19th century. Federal style examples are at 16 Hollis Street, built c. 1800 on a side-gabled, 5x2-bay plan with a c. 1920 rear addition, all of which has been put to commercial use. The Colonial Revival style open center entry porch may have also been built at this time. The Federal style side-gabled house at 24 Hollis is from c. 1820 and has a 5x4-bay plan with a rear addition. The Zara Patch House (**MHC #27**) at **31 Hollis Street** is a broad 2 ½-story, front-gabled form with transitional Federal and Greek Revival style details. Houses at **35 Hollis (MHC #28)** and 37 Hollis Street are 5x2-bay, 2 ½-story, side-gabled forms, both built c. 1800, although the house at 35 Hollis has a Queen Anne style open center entry porch. The houses at 40 and 47 Hollis Street are side- and front-gabled 2 ½ story Greek Revival style designs built c. 1840. Houses on Hollis Street from the second half of the 19th century are Victorian Eclectic designs of 1 ½ -2 ½ stories located at 43, 52, 58, 68 and 70 Hollis Street. The building at 30 Hollis Street also dates from this period (c. 1890) but is unusual for its historic commercial use as small retail shops. Twentieth century construction includes the 1914 yellow brick Spanish Revival style Boutwell School at 78 Hollis and the c. 1940 Verizon telephone exchange building at 17 Hollis Street.

Selected Descriptions**Civic Buildings**

The **First Parish Church (MHC #22)** at **1 Powderhouse Road** is a 3x5-bay, 2-story, front-gabled, wood-framed building with a steeple above the façade. A three-bay entrance portico with two fluted Tuscan columns in antis is recessed into the pedimented front gable elevation. The steeple rises from the roof on a 2-level, square wood clapboard base with cornice, corner pilasters and a clock on three sides; the second story of the tower is an octagonal block with bell roof and has louvered panels that may conceal a carillon. The spire is a hexagonal pyramid sheathed in wood clapboards capped by a round finial and weathervane in the form of a rooster. Decorative features include the flushboard tympanum with triangular ornament, paneled pilasters at the corners of the building and at the outer edges of the portico, wide frieze at the eaves and molded cornice.

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Windows in the portico and second story of the side elevations are 25/25 double-hung sash; those on the first story of the sides are 10/10 double-hung units; the three entries in the portico have wide trim with bosses at the upper corners; the center entry has a double leaf door. The building faces Main Street east of the town common which is lined with split granite posts and wood rails. The Lawrence Academy campus is adjacent to the south. The First Parish is the most prominent of Groton's churches due to its size and central location. Alterations to the design include the addition of the steeple, portico, columns and Greek Revival trim in the façade in 1839 as well as the rear gable roofed wood clapboard block of two stories in 2004.

The **Union Congregational Church at 218 Main Street (MHC #XX)** is a front-gabled, wood-framed, Federal style building of five by four bays. The steeple above the façade rises from a square base clad in wood clapboards while the intermediate section is built on a smaller square plan with canted corners and corner pilasters as well as louvered vents for the carillon. The hexagonal spire is pyramidal and terminates in a round finial with a weathervane above. A variety of window types exists including Queen Anne sash in the second level of the façade, double-hung units in the third level of the façade, 6/6 double-hung sash in the flushboard tympanum. Side elevations are lit by a combination of fixed stained glass and 4/1 double-hung sash. Windows in the façade are trimmed by a molded surround with shouldered hoods. A central double-leaf door gives access to the interior and is flanked by paneled walls. Paired pilasters and fluted columns demarcate the five bays of the flushboard façade. Side and rear walls are clad in wood clapboard. The principal elevation faces a small lawn bounded by a fence of granite posts and iron rails. The Congregational Church is in excellent condition, appears relatively unaltered and is comparable in scale and detail to the First Parish Church (MHC #22).

The **Sacred Heart Parish Catholic Church at 297 Main Street (MHC #XX)** is an English Revival style, front-gabled, 1x6-bay form with wood clapboard siding in the façade and stucco as well as clapboard in the side elevations. The rear of the roof peak is occupied by an 8-sided octahedral bell tower that rises from a square base with louvred side panels. Enclosed gabled porches occupy the center of the façade and the southeast corner of the side elevation. A variety of window types exists, including the fixed stained glass example in the steeply pitch gable peak of the façade, tripartite 6-pane fixed sash in the front entry porch, casements with quarrel panes in the side entry porch and double-hung units in the side elevations. Wall fields finished with stucco on the side elevations and in the peak of the side porch are divided by half-timbering. The church is in excellent condition and appears to be relatively unaltered despite its having been moved from the campus of the Groton School on Farmers Row 1 ½ miles to the south.

The former **Baptist Church at 264 Main Street (MHC #154)**, now in use as a residence, is a front-gabled, 3x5-bay, 2 1/2-story form with steeple above the south-facing façade. A Victorian entry porch with jigsaw brackets, turned posts and entablature covers the center entry. The steeple rises from the roof on a square wood clapboard base with cornice and contains a clock on three sides. The second story of the tower is a narrower square block with corner pilasters and has louvered panels that may conceal a carillon; the spire is a hexagonal pyramid capped by a round finial and weathervane. Decorative elements include the closed gable in the façade, molded cornice, frieze board at the eaves and paneled pilasters. Windows in the façade include a multiple-pane lunette trimmed with a wood keystone in the gable, compass window with bold hood in the

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second story and 16-pane fixed sash flanking the center entry; the second story of the side elevations are lit by 16/16 double-hung sash; those on the first are paired 4/4 units. The center entry has a double leaf door and plain trim. A modern addition has been made to the east side elevation and contains a garage. The former church is the only one of three Pre-Industrial churches in Groton Center in use as a residence

The **Groton Town Hall at 173 Main Street (MHC #3)** is a brick, front-gabled, Victorian Eclectic style building of 3x8 bays and 2 ½ stories. Decorative features include the prominent architrave with modillions and closed gable, flat-roofed open entry porch with balustrade and Corinthian columns, flat as well as segmental arched window hoods, brick pilasters with molded caps that mark the bays and the double-leaf center entry with transom and segmental arched hood under the entry porch. Windows are mainly 8/8 double-hung sash with a rose window in the front gable peak. The granite foundation and slate shingle roof add to the quality of the design of the town's principal civic building. The setting is close to Main Street in the core of the Groton Center Area.

The **Groton Public Library at 99 Main Street (MHC #146)** is a 4-bay, 1-1/2-story Classical Revival style design with a ridge hipped roof built of yellow brick with a wing on the south side that is set back from the façade. An enclosed gabled entry porch occupies the center of the principal elevation and a modern rear addition of 3 stories can be seen from the rear. Decorative features consist of the tall brick chimney rising from the south roof slope with pronounced corbel, string and beltcourses done in masonry across the façade, the gabled entry porch with a bas relief in the tympanum over an entablature which is supported by paired Ionic fluted columns, square pilasters flanking the entry which has a classical surround including a cornice with consoles at the corners. A copper ventilator marks the rear slope of the roof. Windows in the main block are tripartite round headed sash with brick hoods and stone lintels on either side of the entry and grouped fixed square 6-pane sash in the south wing. The library is set close to the road and across Main Street from the First Parish Church. The 1999 addition is thoughtfully done in yellow brick and adopts design elements from the original building including window placement, roof shape and material and wall ornament such as the beltcourse. While it is much smaller than the brick town hall, the library is the only civic building in the town center that is comparable to it due to the construction material and the similarly high quality of the late Victorian period design

The **Prescott School at 145 Main Street (MHC #147)** is an institutional scaled brick, 2-story, 11x1-bay building with a flat roof. The central 3 bays project from the plane of the façade in a gabled pavilion and the rear of the plan is expanded by a 2-story section immediately behind the main block and a high 1-story block that contains the gymnasium. Decorative features on the main block include the brick parapet above the bold molded cornice, quoins, pilasters flanking the central bay and edges of the pavilion which has a cornice, architrave and frieze with building name below the lunette in the tympanum of the pavilion gable. Fenestration in the façade is symmetrical. Large brick panels fill the fields of the side elevations. Windows in the main block are modern double-hung sash with 9/9 pane configurations at the outer edges of the façade and beside the pavilion; 2 sets of paired 12/12 sash light the intermediate bays; paired 9/9 sash light the outer bays of the pavilion and a compass window lights the second story of the central bay in the pavilion. Trim consists of flat arches in stone and stone sills. Windows in the pavilion have flat arches augmented by keystones and

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springers while basement windows also have stone flat arches and are fixed 4-pane sash paired under their paired counterparts above. The center entry has a double leaf door flanked by pilasters and surmounted by a tall broken swan's neck pediment. The rear sections of the school are lit by a variety of 6/6, 12/12 and paired 12/2 double-hung sash which lack the flat arches and stone sills. Translucent fiberglass panels light the gymnasium in the rear. The Panel Brick and Classical Revival styles and institutional scale of the Prescott School are unique in Groton Center

The Victorian Eclectic style **Chaplin School-Legion Hall** at **75 Hollis Street** (MHC #137) is a brick 2 1/2-story, 3x3-bay, front-gabled form with a gabled 2-story wood clapboard rear addition from c. 1900. Decorative features include the deep eaves, molded cornice with gable returns and the variety of window types in the east facing façade. Windows in the façade are paired arched openings in the center of both stories with arched brick hoods and granite lintels as well as an oculus in the gable peak. Six over six double-hung sash light the outer bays of the second story. Side elevations are lit by three 6/6 double-hung sash on each story with arched hoods and granite lintels. Entrance is through two doors in the outer bays of the first story. The well-maintained building is taller than most other 2-story examples due to its institutional purpose and occupies a prominent site at the corner of Hollis and School Streets just north of the Old Burying Ground.

Additional civic buildings exist in the center and include the modern Police/Fire station at 99 Pleasant Street, the former fire station at 20 Station Avenue, built of brick c. 1915 as the I.O.O.F. meeting hall, the Groton Historical Society's **Governor Boutwell House** at **172 Main Street** (MHC #4), the 1914 Spanish Revival style yellow brick Boutwell School at 78 Hollis Street.

Residential Buildings

One of the oldest houses in Groton is the Colonial style Bradstreet Parsonage at **46 Hollis Street (MHC #29)** which is a 2 1/2-story, 7x2-bay form with a 1-story shed roofed rear addition from the mid 20th century. While the form is side-gabled, the principal elevation faces south rather than west toward the street. The two eastern bays appear to have been added prior to the 20th century. Decorative features include the corner boards, closed gable, molded cornice and symmetrical façade fenestration. The off-center entry has classical trim including an architrave, frieze and cornice, 1/2-length sidelights, pilasters with molded caps and bases; a secondary entry occupies the bay second from the eastern end of the façade. Windows are primarily 6/6 double-hung sash but include in the eastern bays 12/12 sashes and triple-hung 6/6/6 sashes in the first story of the western or street elevation. The modern detached barn is a low 1-story front-gabled form clad in board and batten siding. A picket fence separates the house from the street and a granite hitching post occupies the front yard. The house is in good condition and occupies a parcel in the densely built up section of the area that is the earliest to be settled by Europeans.

Another 18th century house in the area is at **142 Main Street (MHC #9)** which has at its core a Colonial Period house that has been altered by raising the roof during the Victorian Period. Flared corner posts are visible in the second floor rooms while the first floor demonstrates more recent framing techniques. The 3x2-bay, 2 1/2-story, side-gambrel form is enlarged at the rear with a 1 1/2-story perpendicular addition lit at the

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upper level by a shed dormer. Other secondary masses include the 1-story bay window lighting the southwest corner of the first story, the full-width shed porch attached to the façade and the central gambrel dormer on the front slope of the roof. Two corbelled brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge. Decorative features include the molded cornice with brackets at the corners, flanking the central bay and at changes in roof pitch, additional brackets at the molded cornice of the bay window, gable returns, vergeboard with quatrefoils on the roof dormer, beltcourses between floors, gabled pavilion projecting slightly from the front porch which is supported by paired colonettes on a combined knee wall/balustrade. Central and side staircases access the porch. Windows are 2/2 double-hung sash with projecting flat trim. The sash in the roof dormer has a crested top and the double leaf center entry has simple trim. The detached barn in the rear is a side-gambrel, 2-story, 3-bay form of approximately 20'x50'. The front slope of the roof is articulated by a prominent gambrel dormer with a mow door within and additional shed dormers light the upper floor. The central vehicle door has been filled in with a modern pedestrian door. A pyramidal cupola occupies the center of the roof ridge. The exterior materials are wood clapboard and wood shingles. The house and barn are more highly ornamented in the Victorian style than most others in Groton Center

The house at **228 Main Street (MHC #36)** is a Federal style, 2 1/2-story, 5x2-bay, side-gabled form with a rear addition of 2 stories. Decorative features include the corner boards, molded cornice and symmetrical fenestration in the façade. Windows are mainly 12/12 double-hung sash with projecting beaded trim with the exception of the 6/6 window in the south side gable peak and the 6/6 units in the second story of the south elevation of the rear addition. The center entry is trimmed in classical detail including entablature, pilasters and sidelights. The front dooryard is demarcated by a locally unusual low retaining wall of granite slabs divided in the center by a set of granite steps; low granite posts mark the corners of the wall. Two brick corbelled chimneys rise from the rear slope of the roof. The house is typical of Federal style residences in Groton Center in terms of scale, design quality and materials although it is more well maintained than the average. The setting is immediately adjacent to Main Street and to the modern commercial building housing a grocery store

The Park House at **36 Main Street (MHC #19)**, now the residence of the Lawrence Academy Headmaster, is a large, highly ornate Classical Revival style estate with a 5-bay Federal style house at its core. The main block of the house is a 2 1/2-story, 7x2-bay, ridge-hipped form with a 2-story ridge-hipped ell attached to the north side elevation. Three gabled dormers mark the front slope of the roof while three large brick chimneys rise from the sides and rear. An arched open porch covers the center entry. Ornamental elements include the molded cornice, corner boards and the symmetrical fenestration in the façade; paired Doric columns support the entry porch with its broken segmental arched pediment. Windows have beaded trim and hoods on the first story. Sash are primarily 6/6 double-hung units although the dormers have 3/3 sash and the center entry is flanked by smaller 2/2 sash. The center entry has 1/2-length sidelights, pilasters and a cornice. The site is elevated above and well back from the southern end of Main Street, separated by a picket fence and winding drive up the hill. Ornamental plantings and trees enhance the parcel. The house is the largest and among the most refined in the town center and it is comparable in scale to the larger estates on Farmers Row. The Lawrence Academy campus is located adjacent to the east (rear) and north side.

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The Caleb Butler House at **85 Main Street (MHC #17)** is a Federal style, 5x3-bay, side-gabled, 2 1/2-story building with a 2-story ell attached to the northwest (rear) corner. Ornamental features consist of the corner boards, molded cornice, gable returns and symmetrical fenestration in the façade. The east-facing center entry has a classical surround with a 5-pane transom, pilasters, architrave, frieze and cornice as well as an open hip-roofed porch with entablature that is supported by Doric columns. A secondary entry in the south elevation also has a transom. Additional access is through the north side elevation. Windows are primarily 12/12 double-hung sash with beaded trim although paired 6/6 examples exist in the south gable peak. Two internal brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge. A picket fence separates the house from the road which is located close to Main Street on a small parcel across the street from Lawrence Academy, the owner of the building. The Butler House is among the well preserved Federal style residences on Main Street.

The Brazer House at **98 Main Street (MHC #24)** is a two and one-half-story, six by five bay ridge-hipped form with two corbelled chimneys. Major exterior features include the center pavilion of two bays with gabled roof, symmetrical fenestration in the façade, the denticulated cornice, colossal pilasters with pulvinated frieze at the corners and flanking the pavilion. The elaborate entry surround with denticulated cornice, architrave, sidelights, fanlight and pilasters is among Groton's finest architectural features. Windows are 6/6 double hung sash with aluminum storm windows and plain trim. Exterior materials are wood clapboard and flushboard on the facade; chimneys are brick. The setting is elevated above the east side of Main Street with terraced ground, granite steps and railing posts leading to the road. The house is one of the most ornate Federal style designs in Groton and is among the most well preserved in the town. A rear ell of one story may have been an early 20th century addition; a second ell was built in 1992

The Dix House at **117 Main Street (MHC #13)** is a locally rare residential brick example of 3 stories and 5x2 bays. The roof of the main block is a ridge-hipped form and, attached to the north side of the brick block, there is a side-gabled wood frame addition of 2 stories and 5 bays that is expanded toward Main Street by a gabled entry porch and by an enclosed 2-story porch at the north end wall. Federal style decorative features in the brick block include the corner boards, molded cornice and symmetrical fenestration in the façade where the third story windows are slightly smaller than those on the first and second stories. The recessed center entry has a cornice and transom above. Brick beltcourses demarcate the stories on the façade. The wood frame addition has little ornament other than the Doric columns supporting the raking cornice of the entry porch. Windows are mainly 12/12 double-hung sash with plain trim except in the third story of the façade which has 8/8 units; multiple pane fixed sash light the second story of the enclosed porch at the north end wall. Chimneys exist at the north wall of the brick block, the south end of the façade of the wood block and at the north end of the wood block. The house occupies a prominent site at the corner of Main Street and Broadmeadow Road across from state route 40. Although it is only in poor to fair condition, the brick section of the building represents a more formal design than most others in the town center.

The Bancroft House at **179 Main Street (MHC #148)** is 4x5-bay, front-gabled, Greek Revival style residence of larger scale than most others in the town center. It is distinguished by the classical portico supported by colossal fluted Doric columns in antis. The south elevation is expanded by a gabled porch enclosed with glazed side walls, sidelights and transom. A pavilion with wall gable rises above the porch and the building

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extends rearward from the porch, suggesting a later addition. Decorative features include the prominent front portico with its closed gable, molded cornice and entablature above the four columns and the symmetrical fenestration in the 4-bay façade. Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash with the exception of the triple-hung 6/6/6 units in the first story of the façade and the 6/6 double-hung unit with sidelights in the tympanum. The principal entry is through the glassed in porch on the south elevation. A secondary entry has a Victorian hood with carved brackets to the rear of the porch. The detached barn is a large, 2-story, front-gabled form with a rolling vehicle door below a mow door in the east facing façade. Fenestration in the principal elevation includes fixed 12-pane sash in the rolling door, at the south side of the door, and a tripartite example in the gable peak. Additional details include the molded cornice and corner boards; the building is sheathed in wood clapboards. The house at 179 Main Street is unique in Groton due to the colossal columns in the façade. Its location is adjacent to the town hall and close to Main Street with a larger lot than most others in the town center. The building has been placed under a preservation restriction.

The Waters House dormitory at **11 Lowell Road (MHC #12)** houses students at Lawrence Academy and has elements of the Federal and Second Empire styles. The building is a 2 1/2-story, 3x2-bay form with Mansard roof, full width front porch and projecting porte cochere. Additional secondary masses include the 1-story rear ell and the 1-story, 3-sided bay window in the west side elevation with denticulated cornice, paired arched windows and corner pilasters. Federal style ornament consists of the symmetrical fenestration in the façade but the Second Empire style details overshadow the earlier design and include the three dormers with heavy arched hoods across the front and two on the sides. Additional detail includes the denticulated cornice with paired brackets, paneled corner pilasters with molded caps and bases, prominent bracketed hoods with keystones over the windows including a pedimented example over the center window in the second story of the façade, denticulated cornice in the porch and the porte cochere which is supported by square posts with caps and bases, open spandrels articulated by pendants at the arch crowns. Windows are mainly 2/2 double-hung sash except the 1/1 sash in the bay window. The center entry is flanked by pilasters and has an entablature above a molded segmental arch over the door. The detached barn is a 3-bay ridge-hipped form of 2 stories with a 2-bay secondary mass at the west elevation. Two rolling vehicle doors provide access through the south facing elevation. A central mow door has an arched compass window above. Other windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with segmental arched tops. The buildings are among the more highly ornamented examples in the area and have a prominent site just off Main Street.

The Ridgeway-Capell Duplex at **103 Main Street (MHC #15)** is a 2 1/2-story double house with its gable end toward the street. Entrances to the building exist on the north, south and west (street) elevations which have, respectively, 5, 4 and 5 bays. Secondary masses include the three pedimented entry porches and the rear ell of one story. Federal style design elements are the triangular gable ornament with multiple pane windows, corner boards, molded cornice and closed gable. Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with hoods over those on the first story and beaded trim above. Brick chimneys rise from the front and rear of the roof ridge, the rear being the larger. The detached garage has a low-pitched ridge-hipped roof, square ventilator in the center and wood clapboard walls; modern roll-up garage doors access the three bays. The house is close to Main Street and has a triangular gable ornament similar to that on the house at 52 Hollis Street. The double house plan is a locally rare example from the period.

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Commercial Architecture

One of a very few 18th century commercial buildings from Groton Center to survive is the former Gerrish Store at **118 Hollis Street (MHC #103)** which is a 6x3-bay, 2-story, ridge-hipped form with elements of the Federal style and a 1 1/2-story wood clapboard front-gabled addition at the southeast corner. An open gable-roofed porch covers the two center entries. Decorative features include the corner boards, molded cornice and symmetrical façade. Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with plain exterior trim. The paired center entries each have double leaf doors, plain trim and are covered by a gabled porch supported by square posts with molded caps and bases. An entablature atop the posts supports the raking cornice of the porch. The gabled addition at the southeast corner is a 3x2-bay form with a pent roof that covers the center entry and integrates the bay window in the façade. Two tall brick chimneys rise from the north and south slope of the hipped roof. The former store is well-maintained and is in use as a multiple unit residence. The 6x3-bay hip-roofed form is unique in Groton

The Woods Store at **148 Main Street (MHC #144)** is a brick 5x3-bay, 2 1/2-story, side-gabled design with elements of the Federal style. A full-width hipped porch covers the first story of the façade and a 2-story rear addition has been built of wood with wood clapboard sheathing. Decorative features include the molded cornice, gable returns, 2 corbelled chimneys at the edges of the front slope of the roof and the symmetrical fenestration in the façade. The porch is has square posts supporting three modified segmental arched openings across the façade. Windows in the second story of the façade and on both stories of the side elevations are 6/6 double-hung sash with stone lintels and sills while the 2 windows in the first story of the façade are larger single-pane fixed sash with stone sills that alternate bays with the two double-leaf doors, all of which have plain trim. The detached barn in the rear is a 2-story, front-gabled form with elements of the Victorian Eclectic style. Decorative features include the corner pilasters, gable returns, pyramidal ventilator on the roof ridge and the gabled dormer in the south roof slope. Access is through a plainly trimmed rolling vehicle door in the south corner of the façade; exterior walls are clad in wood clapboards. The well-maintained Federal style brick store is the sole example of brick construction from the period still in commercial use.

Old Burying Ground

The **Old Burying Ground (MHC #800)** on Legion Road was the initial and sole place of burial for Groton residents until the 1840s when the Groton Cemetery opened on Chicopee Row. The Old Burying Ground is approximately four acres and contains perhaps 3,000 headstones. Additional unmarked burials from a time before permanent stone markers came into use are presumed to exist. While the parcel is generally flat, the ground is comprised of low rolling mounds reflecting the naturally uneven topography. The earliest stone is a slate marker from 1704. As many as two thirds of the markers are slate and were placed prior to the mid 19th century. Subsequent markers are made of granite and marble. A small number of obelisks and table markers exist. The perimeter is fenced in stone with iron gates at Hollis Street and on Legion Road. The gates lead to a level path cut into the ground among the natural earthen mounds. Burial vaults with inscribed granite

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headstones are located along Legion Road as well. Few plot defining features exist other than a small number of granite corner posts and one square outline of low granite curbstones around the Champney family plot.

Landscape Features

Features other than buildings exist in the landscape that add to the historic appearance of the Groton Center Area. Most significant are the common areas including the Town Common, located at the corner of Main and Pleasant Street which is the site of a stone watering trough, a brick walk and a flagpole; the Prescott Common at the corner of Main and Old Ayer Road which has a marker commemorating the service of Colonel William Prescott, a former neighbor, for his leadership of American troops during the Battle of Bunker Hill; and the Unitarian Common at the corner of Main Street and Lowell Road in front of the First Parish Church which has a brass plaque commemorating the meeting of troops here prior to their departure for Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775. None of the commons are larger than an acre. **Milestones** of slate were placed by Dr. Oliver Prescott in the late 18th century in three locations in the area (**MHC # 919**). The most prominent is at the east side of the corner of Main and Old Ayer Road and depicts a hand with a pointed finger and states that it is 36 miles to the Charles River Bridge. Other markers of slate placed around the same time are across Main Street on the east corner of Main and Old Ayer Road and in the front yard of the **Groton Inn at 130 Main Street (MHC #11, NR IND, 1976)**. The largest landscape feature is Gibbet Hill, located 1/10 mile east of Main Street between Lowell Road and Martins Pond Road. The drumlin rises to 516' above sea level and is a dramatic sight with its bare grassy top and herd of Black Angus cows. Another large feature is the campus of the Lawrence Academy, located on Powderhouse Road and along Main Street from 36 Main Street to 86 Main Street. The main quadrangle is east of Powderhouse Road between the 1956 school building, the Gray, Ansin and Ferguson Buildings, and clearly relates the sense of a small private school. Another feature of the campus visible from Main Street is the athletic field complex behind the houses at 41-71 Main Street. Baseball diamonds, tennis courts and a small commemorative park are located here. Numerous fences line the yards of houses in the Groton Center Area and appear as picket fences, wood post and rail and granite post and metal rail types. Low split granite slab retaining walls that demarcate front yards exist at 164, 172, 208 and 228 Main Street. Also numerous are the randomly placed granite posts. Intended either for tying horses or to support part of a fence that has been removed, these small items add subtle character to the area.

Conclusion/Comparison

The Groton Center Area is the town's largest collection of residential, civic and commercial buildings that, as a result of local historic preservation legislation that covers Main, School and part of Hollis Streets passed in the 1960s, is very well-maintained overall and contains a small number of modern buildings or architectural intrusions. Many of the houses as well as the Town Hall, the former Shattuck Store and the Prescott School have been restored to a greater or lesser degree. The highest concentration of synthetic siding and recent additions is found on Court Street and Station Avenue, the former industrial section of the center that is now the site of the Groton Electric Light Department, a bus company and an oil dealership as well as multiple unit residences adapted from either single family houses or former commercial and industrial buildings. While this area of the center is not subject to local preservation legislation, has not been as carefully maintained and does

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not contain as many restored buildings, it does survive in good condition. Some vacant lots exist where former rail-related buildings and structures have been removed and modern industrial construction exists at the bus company at 39 Court Street and at the rear of the GELD at 23 Station Avenue. The Nashua River Rail Trail occupies the former railroad right of way and passes the vacant site of the former railroad station at the west ends of Station Avenue and Court Street. This vacant area is the subject of plans for redevelopment although no work on the site has begun.

The Groton Center Area occupies a singular position among historic resources in the community, one that does not encourage comparison to other historic areas in Groton due to its size, condition, function and location. The other village in town is at West Groton which comprises less than half the acreage, fewer than half the number of buildings and, while it has churches, a village store, former industrial complex adapted for use as a retirement community and a historic fire station/community center, lacks the civic function of town hall and the commercial activity that takes place in Groton Center.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how the area relates to the historical development of the town. See Continuation Sheet X

Introduction

During the Period of First Settlement (1620-1675), the town's European residents clustered around the intersection of the modern day Main and Hollis Streets with a small number of additional residents scattered over the town. The first Europeans, coming from Boston, Watertown, Woburn and surrounding towns, traveled on paths over Boston, Martins Pond and Longley Roads, Hollis Street and Farmers Row and Chicopee Row, among other secondary roads. The first meetinghouse was built in 1666, probably at or near the current junction of Hollis Street and School Street which gave location to the Old Burying Ground and town pound around the same time (A commemorative marker on the Town Common, assessor #111 50, at the corner of Martins Pond Road and Chicopee Row indicates this to be the site of the initial meetinghouse but substantiation has been unavailable). Growth of the village was curtailed by attacks on the white population by Native Americans starting in 1676, which resulted in the destruction by fire and two-year abandonment of the town. Attacks continued sporadically until 1724. A second meetinghouse was built in 1679 after the return of residents. The third meetinghouse, built in 1714, occupied the current site of the First Parish Church and shifted the center of the town to the south. Henceforth, Groton Center became a linear village and was roughly bounded by the old meetinghouse site to the north and the intersection of Lowell Road and Main Street at the south. The town's and the center village's population remained primarily agricultural for nearly two centuries, although some small scale industrial activity took place. The 1714 meetinghouse was replaced with the current building in 1755, a time when several prosperous farm families began to consider the importance of pursuits beyond agriculture, resulting in the founding of the Groton Academy (later renamed Lawrence Academy) in 1792 and an increase in the number of local professionals in the fields of medicine, commerce, architecture and law. Relatively large scale industrial concerns outside the village in the nineteenth century occupied perhaps a fourth of the overall population in saw and grist milling, papermaking, plough

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manufacturing and tanning. Activities of village residents gradually changed in the mid 20th century from farming and small local industry to commuting by employees to regional employment centers such as Lowell and Boston.

Contact Period 1500-1620

Little is known about Groton Center specifically in the time before European settlers arrived. Conjecture by employees of the Massachusetts Historical Commission is that there were several trails used by Native Americans that correspond to current roads. In the center, these are Boston Road, Hollis Street and Lowell Road. These routes were part of the regional trail network that included Forge Village Road, Chicopee Row, Sandy Pond Road, Longley Road and Martins Pond Road. River fording locations also existed and are similar to today's bridge locations over the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers.

First Settlement Period 1620-1675

With the advent of written records, it is possible to determine that the road from Groton to Concord was laid out through Westford in 1673 according to Dr. Green (Vol. 3, p. 369). Roads from Groton Center to Dunstable and to Lancaster were completed around the same time, approximately 20 years after the first settlers appeared. Francis Boutwell states that Main and Hollis Streets were home to around 12 families or 25% of the town's population in 1662. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) estimates there were 40 houses (or 200 people) and five garrisons by the end of the period, most of which were within the Groton Center Area. The eastern end of Broadmeadow Road was also in place by an early date and gave access to farm fields and meadows.

The town center, focused around the intersection of Hollis and School Streets, contained, in addition to the residences, the 1666 town pound built of wood rails and the meetinghouse which was framed in August, 1666 and finished in October with a thatch roof, half timbered walls filled with clay and daubing, clapboard exterior, two stairways, two floors, shutters, pulpit and glass windows. Residences were either of similar medieval European construction or had the more common New England timber frame, although there are no known surviving houses from the period.

The **Willard Garrison at 153 Main Street (MHC #7)** may have been built as early as 1660 which would make this the sole existing building from the time before the Native American attack on the town during King Philip's War in 1676. Reverend Willard was the town's second minister and is noted by Green and Butler as having occupied one of the town's five garrisons, four of which were within earshot of one another in the center. This may have been the site of church and town meetings prior to construction of the town's initial meetinghouse, built in 1666, and of defensive military action during the attacks of 1676 that resulted in the abandonment of the town. Also, while it may not have occurred at this site, Reverend Willard was accosted by the accused witch Elizabeth Knap in 1671 during which she demonstrated "violent physical actions, mental moods, sudden shrieks, changes of countenance, exclamations, fits, barking, bleating, speaking in different

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voices, ventriloquism” and hurling accusations of torment toward Reverend Willard. He later left town and went on to preach at the Old South Church in Boston where he baptized Benjamin Franklin in 1706.

Colonial Period 1675-1775

Transportation routes expanded during the Colonial Period in the center to include the current Broadmeadow Road which, having previously gone from Main Street to the east side of the meadow, was extended in length from Main Street to Farmers Row in order to accommodate travelers from the western part of the town to the new meetinghouse built in 1714. Powderhouse Road was built up the hill at its current south end to access the gun powder storage building there, although the south end was not built until 1839. The population of the entire town at the start of the period was around 300, suggesting that perhaps 80 people lived in the center. By the end of the period, around 1,600 people lived in the town, 25% of whom (or 400 residents) may have been in the center. From 1676-1678, however, the population dropped to zero due to a devastating attack by Native Americans which resulted, except for the four garrison houses, in the destruction of the entire town including the meetinghouse. Residents fled via Boston Road to Concord and other towns but later returned to rebuild their homes. This was the beginning of a series of approximately nine attacks according to Dr. Green that continued until 1724. Attacks frequently occurred on the western edges of town and resulted in the deaths of settlers as well as Native Americans but sometimes in the capture of white women and children. Captives either returned, were adopted into tribes if they were young or in some cases, chose to remain with the captors, usually in Canada. Despite the hostile conditions, school was kept starting in 1681. Economic activity consisted primarily of agriculture although there were stores (one run by Jonas Cutler in 1768), a tannery (run by Benjamin Bancroft near the current Lawrence Playground), and a bakery (run by a man named Quailes near the site of 164 Main Street and may comprise the rear of this house). Additional commerce and small scale industry took place outside the village and attracted the business of village dwellers.

Architecture in the town center during the period included the four garrisons (no longer extant with the possible exception of 153 Main Street) at the sites of the Prescott School at 145 Main Street, the Bancroft House at 179 Main Street and the house at 201 Main Street with a fourth at an unknown location. The second meetinghouse was built at the corner of School and Hollis Streets in 1679 or 1680 and had a shingled roof, clapboard walls, glass windows, two doors, stairs and a pulpit. Thomas Boyden, the carpenter, finished the building in 1683/4. This was in use for the next 35 years until it was adapted for use as a school, a function that lasted only two years before a new school was built. The Town Pound was built near the meetinghouse in 1665/6 by Joseph Gilson and Daniel Pearce. The third meetinghouse was constructed on the current First Parish site in 1716 at a size of 35' x 40', was enlarged in 1727/8 and again in 1730. The fourth and current meetinghouse was begun in May, 1754 with a foundation measuring 65'x50', a belfry at one end and porch opposite.

The **Bradstreet House at 46 Hollis Street (MHC #29)** was built in 1706 as a parsonage, probably for Reverend Dudley Bradstreet, Groton's 5th minister. Francis Boutwell refers in early town records to a 1706 vote to build a house 38' long and 18' wide. Reverend Bradstreet was born in Andover in 1678, graduated

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from Harvard in 1698, married Mary Wainwright in 1704 and was a grandson of Massachusetts Governor Thomas Dudley. He was dismissed from service by the town of Groton in 1712 for unspecified reasons. It was in 1890 the second oldest house in town although it had by then undergone several changes including the addition of some length to the north end of the façade and a piazza. Reverend John Todd may have occupied the house in 1829 when serving as minister to the Union Church, the group who seceded from the First Parish Church in 1826.

Federal Period 1775-1830

Roads in the town center were realigned in 1797 so that Main Street was straightened by the addition of a segment of the current Main Street between Hollis Street and School Street, thereby eliminating a previously existing jog in the road. The house at 255 Main Street is at an angle relative to Main Street and may suggest the previous alignment of the road. Other streets remained in place and no additional principal routes were added. Dr. Oliver Prescott placed milestones on Main Street in 1783, just prior to the passage of state legislation requiring selectmen to mark angles and corners. There are a total of four in Groton and three in the Center. These are at the south end of Main Street and in front of Groton Inn at **130 Main Street (MHC #11, NR IND 1976)**. Stage coach service from Boston through Groton and beyond to the west and north began around the time the milestones were put in place and continued into the 1830s with stops at the Groton Inn, also known as the Stagecoach Inn. The population of the entire town in 1820 was 1,897, suggesting that approximately 450 people lived in and around the Center by the end of the period. Of these, perhaps three or four were African American, a figure based on the total black population for the town of 11 in 1780, the year slavery was abolished. Males of military age were partially involved in the Battles of Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775. Soldiers gathered on the green in front of the First Parish Church prior to the fight and were late arriving to the battle with the exception of a small number who, suspecting imminent military action based on the arrival of cannon in Groton the night before, left town on the 18th and took part in the fight. Women from Groton also participated in the war and, under the command of Prudence Wright, acted to block a bridge in Pepperell and succeeded in detaining a British spy there.

Economic activity in the area was diverse but relatively small in scale compared to farming, still the principal pursuit of Groton residents. Stores described by May in Groton Houses on page 77 and by Green in Volume I, Chapter XII, pages 6-7 and Chapter VII, page 4 include the Gardner-Gerrish Store, now the multiple unit residence relocated in the late 19th century to **118 Hollis Street (MHC #103)**, which was built at the corner of Main Street and Lowell Road in 1783 and is one of a few surviving commercial buildings from the period. Mr. Gerrish later ran a store in the brick building at **113 Main Street (MHC #14)**. The store of Aaron Brown was built c. 1800, was later operated by Benjamin Dix, and remains at the north corner of Main and Broadmeadow (**117 Main Street MHC #13**). David Childs (also spelled Child), starting around 1800, and his successor Milo Shattuck, ran a store on Main Street across from the Congregational Church, very near the site of General Thomas Staples and Walter Shattuck's store, located just north on the same side of Main Street. James Brazer conducted a business dealing in India and English goods with Aaron Brown at the corner of Main Street and Lowell Road which, after Mr. Brazer's death in 1818, was moved to Gerrish's store. Mr. Brazer was described by Samuel Lawrence as the richest and most prominent merchant in town. Mr. Brazer's

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son William F. Brazer later ran a store, which was advertised for sale in 1829, in or connected to **95 Main Street (MHC #16)**, then the home of Jeremiah Kilborn (also spelled Kilburn and Kilbourn) in which Mr. Kilborn ran a hat factory in 1824. Major William Swan ran a store in the late 18th century in his house at **25 School Street (MHC #33)** that was later owned by Charles Woolley Jr. Thomas Sackville Tufton was a Revolutionary War Period trader in Groton and Eliphalet Wheeler was a merchant here c. 1814, both at unspecified locations. Joseph and Phineas Hemenway ran a bookstore and bindery c. 1815 on Main Street just north of Elm Street which was later operated by Albert Spalter (also spelled Spaulter). Another bookstore and bindery was run by Alpheus Richardson from c. 1815-1850 at the south corner of Main and Elm Streets.

Taverns were another form of commercial enterprise in Groton and were located mainly on long distance travel routes. The most prominent example is the Groton Inn which is still in business at **130 Main Street (NRIND, 1976, MHC #11)**. This was owned by Jonathan Keep in 1781 when it was approximately half its current size and just after it was sold by the Reverend Samuel Dana who had gone to New Hampshire as a Tory during the Revolutionary War. Subsequent owners were Joseph Hall by 1798 and Joseph Hoar by 1825. By 1785, Captain Jephtha Richardson ran a tavern (moved away in 1840) at the current site of the Baptist Church at **264 Main Street (MHC #154)**. A man named Emerson operated an inn at the site of the existing store at 235 Main Street. Also, Butler's field notes for his 1830 and 1832 maps list taverns in Groton Center north of the First Parish Meetinghouse run by Amos Alexander and Samuel Tenney which may correspond to some inns already mentioned. Aaron Brown, the storekeeper at the corner of Main and Broadmeadow, ran a potash works just west of his store on Broadmeadow near the current gate to the Lawrence Playground. This was in place by 1787 as it was burned around that time during Shays' Rebellion, the perpetrators, including Job Shattuck, being arrested by Mr. Brown who served as constable.

Groups of citizens gathered in Groton Center for charitable or other types of social interaction. One of the earliest such institutions in Groton was the St. Paul's Lodge of Freemasons, established as a forum for discussion of questions of morality in 1797. In 1802, the destruction by fire of the predecessor house to **Brazer House at 98 Main Street (MHC #24)** caused the formation of the first local fire company which used the "Torrent" fire engine, designed and built by the engineer and law student Loammi Baldwin Jr. in a house nearby. The engine remained in use for over 80 years and is now located at the Groton Historical Society. A second fire at the site of **14 Main Street (MHC #20)** in 1815 inspired the foundation of the Groton Fire Club which met until 1872, around the time the town assumed responsibility for fire prevention. Also, The Massachusetts Court of Common Pleas met in the **First Parish Meetinghouse (MHC #22)** from 1776-1787 when Groton was a shire town of Middlesex County.

Architecture

Groton Center architecture from the Federal Period has numerous associations with important local citizens and events. Some of the more well-documented examples are described below.

Religious schisms based on liberal versus conservative interpretation of the scriptures occurred in many Massachusetts towns in the mid to late 1820s with Groton being no exception. The breach in Groton began

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when the superannuated reverend Daniel Chaplin, serving as minister since 1778, fainted in the pulpit due to excessive heat in July, 1825, prompting the town to hire John Todd as the interim replacement while ideas about a permanent replacement were discussed at town meeting. Having received from Reverend Chaplin a request for a written statement of the preferred tenets of any potential successor, the committee declined to respond and hired Reverend Charles Robinson against the wishes of the ailing reverend. This led to secession by the adherents of Reverend Chaplin and the formation of the Congregationalist Society, led by the recovered reverend Chaplin, in 1826. According to Dr. Green (Vol. 4, p. 1), the Congregationalists held a conservative interpretation of the bible while the Unitarians were more liberal; however, while the Unitarians retained the old church records and so were considered the older body, the new group of Congregationalists outnumbered them. The result was the construction, beginning with the cornerstone ceremony held on July 4th, 1826, of the Congregational Church at **218 Main Street**.

The original owner of the parcel at **11 Lowell Road** may have been Jonas Cutler who ran a store nearby from c. 1770-1782. Major Thomas Gardner, also a storekeeper, was the subsequent landowner and builder of the house and store (moved to **118 Hollis Street in 1885, MHC #103**) in 1783. John Peabody was the owner by 1830 who worked as a tanner and owned a shop across Main Street 1/10 mile to the south on the current site of the Lawrence Playground. Mr. Peabody was listed in the 1855 census as a tanner living at this location with his family and two boarders who worked as tanners.

The Stuart J. Park-Thompson House at **47 Main Street (MHC #18)** was built c. 1812, possibly by Peter Nutting according to Virginia May. Mr. Park was a descendant of the Park family of gravestone carvers and stone masons and was taxed in 1847 for possession of over \$20,000 in real and personal property, a great deal for Groton at the time. Stuart J. Park may have been responsible, according to Whipple's "Academy Days", for construction of the stone foundation of the original 1792 Groton Academy building located 1/10 mile west until it burned in 1868. Stuart J. Park, a mason, builder and architect, also built the New Hampshire State house in 1819, stone jails in Portland Me. in 1798, Northampton in 1801, Worcester, Charlestown in 1803 and Concord in 1810. Mr. Park also built the Middlesex lock and canal system in 1813, the Lowell Railroad in 1832 and the Charlestown dry docks in addition to serving in the Massachusetts State Legislature from 1837-1840. Many Park family members were involved in carving gravestones in Groton's cemetery as well as other cemeteries around the region. Park Street in Boston was said by Chase and Gabel to have been named for him in 1834.

The house at **85 Main Street (MHC #17)**, built c. 1810 for Caleb Butler (1776-1854), may have been built by the housewright Joseph Sawtell, resident of 264 Old Ayer Road (MHC #50) according to local historians. Mr. Butler, who was a native of Pelham, NH and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1800, served numerous civic and professional functions in Groton including lawyer, Lawrence Academy preceptor (1802-1810, 1812-1815, presumably when he met his wife, the former student Clarissa Varnum), Groton postmaster (1826-39, 1841-47), land surveyor, Grand Master of Masons in 1842-43, County Commissioner of Roads, creator of the 1829, 1832 and 1847 maps of Groton and author of the "History of the Town of Groton" in 1848. Mr. Butler was also the namesake of the public high school from the time of its construction in 1871 until it was damaged by fire in 1925 and demolished thereafter.

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Brazer House, located at **98 Main Street (MHC #24)**, was constructed in 1802 on the site of a house that burned the previous year. The first owner, James Brazer, Esquire (1760-1818), was a native of Pepperell, representative to the Massachusetts General Court in 1810, a founder of the Groton Academy in 1793, later called the Lawrence Academy. Mr. Brazer, a storekeeper in partnership with his son William (later a resident and storekeeper at 95 Main Street MHC #16) at a building north of 117 Main Street, also served as the initial Master of the Masons Lodge and trustee of the academy from 1795 until his death in 1818. He was described in Dr. Green's work as the richest and most important merchant in the town.

According to Sawyer's research, the brick portion of the house at **117 Main Street (MHC #13)** was built as a store c. 1773 by Jonas Cutler and later owned by Aaron Brown around 1798. The two story ell was built c. 1780 as a horse shed with law offices above. Lawyers working here may have included Samuel Dana (Resident of 86 Main Street MHC #23) and Timothy Bigelow, instructor of the student and engineer Loammi Baldwin Jr. This was the second brick building in the town and is said by GHC researchers to have been built of brick imported from England. The first brick house was located in what is now the town of Ayer. Mr. Brown's business partner was for a time James Brazer who lived at 86 Main Street (MHC #24). Mr. Brazer dissolved his partnership with Mr. Brown in 1805 according to a newspaper ad in the Boston Columbian Centinel and afterward ran the store with his son William (later owner of the store at 95 Main Street, MHC #16). Amos Lawrence, philanthropist, capitalist, industrialist and namesake of Lawrence Academy, served an apprenticeship in this store until he left to conduct business in Boston c, 1807.

The original occupant of the parcel at **164 Main Street (MHC #5)** may have been the baker Charles Quailles, whose sign read "Gingerbread Cake and Biscit Sold Here", and his wife Susanna who worked to defend Jewett's Bridge in Pepperell with 39 other women during the Revolutionary War. Their house may be the rear portion of the current house which was built c. 1811. The land was originally owned by Captain James Parker in the 17th century, an early Groton settler who was born in Woburn in 1649 and was killed with his wife by Native Americans in 1694. The first owner of this house was the lawyer Luther Lawrence from 1811 until he moved to Lowell in 1831, after which time he became mayor of that city. Mr. Lawrence, representative to the Massachusetts General Court from 1812-1822 and in 1829-1830, trustee in 1811 of Lawrence Academy and a brother of Abbott, Amos and William Lawrence, namesakes of Lawrence Academy for their generous donations in the 1840s among many other accomplishments, was taxed in 1830 for his ownership of \$5,000 in real property and \$6,000 in personal property, a great deal more than the average in both cases.

The house at **228 Main Street (MHC #36)** was built c. 1821, or shortly before publication of the Butler Map of 1832 but is not depicted. It is representative of the scale, detail and income level of homes and their owners during the period. The owner depicted on maps from 1847, 1856 and 1875 is Calvin Childs who was taxed in 1875 for ownership of a house, barn and blacksmith shop.

Simpler buildings with more humble historical associations were also constructed in Groton Center. A former owner of **187 Main Street (MHC #2)** may have been Dr. Amos Bancroft in 1840, the first owner of the landmark building at **179 Main Street (MHC #148, built 1839)** which is the neighbor to the south. It is likely

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he owned but did not occupy the smaller house. The architectural forms of the two buildings suggest similar construction dates although local historians indicate 1800 as the construction date for 187 Main Street. Walter Shattuck may also have been an owner in 1846 according to prior GHC research.

The Groton Academy school house was constructed in 1792-3, partially by the stone mason and gravestone carver John Park and by William Nutting who kept a journal of his deliveries of lumber to the construction site. The wood frame building had a foursquare form and was located between the current Brazer and Dana Houses on Main Street. Caleb Butler says in his field notes from 1828-29 that the schoolhouse was painted white.

Early Industrial Period 1830-1870

Travel routes expanded significantly in Groton Center during the Early Industrial Period. The Worcester and Nashua Railroad opened from Ayer to Nashua on December 18, 1848, passing along the right of way just west of Main Street. The railroad encouraged the creation of side streets to connect Main Street to the depot. Station Avenue was accepted by the town on January 15, 1849 and Court Street (initially called Tin Pan Alley) on April 2, 1855. Pleasant Street was in place by 1847 and High Street, later called Powderhouse Road, was in place by 1840 but not accepted by the town as a public way until after 1890. The west end of Elm Street was laid out by County Commissioners on August 20, 1834.

The population in 1830 was 1,925, a figure that would remain fairly stable until the separation of the town of Ayer, formerly South Groton (also called Groton Junction), in 1871. Foreign-born residents began to appear in the 1840s, principally from Ireland as a result of the failed harvests there during that decade. The residents of the center were involved in many civic activities, most important of which were the efforts by local people such as Dr. Amos Farnsworth, William Lawrence Chaplin and Luther Boutelle in conjunction with William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, both of whom visited Groton, to work toward the abolition of slavery. A letter from the daughter of Dr. Farnsworth, referring to a time when he was the resident of **14 Main Street (MHC #20)**, states that in her youth, he harbored runaway slaves and facilitated their transit to Canada. During the years of the Abolition Movement, the Groton Public Library was founded (1854), although it existed with no permanent building until 1893. This organization was joined by the Groton Athenaeum and Groton Cornet Band, both meeting in the new **Town Hall (MHC #3)**, built in 1859. Additional highlights for the residents in these years were the circus performances in the 1830s-40s on the common north of the Old Burying Ground and the 1869 visit by President U. S. Grant to his friend and former U.S. Treasurer, Governor George S. Boutwell of **172 Main Street (MHC #4)**.

Economic activity in the center included a number of stores similar to that of the Federal Period, although these appear to have moved and changed hands frequently judging by the description in local histories of past owners and locations. A shoe factory existed near the Congregational Church in 1855, run by the firm Bigelow and Randall and later by Moses Palmer. The Woods Store at **148 Main Street (MHC #144)** was built of brick in 1835 and remains a highly visible commercial building of the period on Main Street. The building was owned by Henry Woods who sold dry goods, china and groceries as well as running the post

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office until he died fairly young in 1841. A subsequent owner was Mr. Woods' partner, George Boutwell, who ran the store during his time as Massachusetts governor (1851-1853). Agricultural produce included barley, oats, rye, corn, potatoes, hops and tobacco as well as fruit, vegetables and dairy items for shipment to Lowell and Boston.

Architecture

High style residential construction slowed during the Early Industrial Period. Examples include the **Boutwell House at 172 Main Street (MHC #4)**, an Italianate and Greek Revival style mansion that was the home of the two-term (1851-1853) governor of Massachusetts from the time of its construction in 1851 until his death in 1905. He also served as a representative and senator at both the state and federal levels, Secretary of the Treasury under Grant and delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1853, among other offices. While Governor Boutwell spent considerable time in Washington and Boston, his official address remained here. Another important residence built in the same year was the Dr. Joshua Green House at **154 Main Street (MHC #8)**. Dr. Green was a representative to the General Court as well as a trustee of the Groton Academy, later called Lawrence Academy. Dr. Green's son, Samuel, also a doctor and later the town historian, lived here when not practicing medicine in Boston.

The **Baptist Church**, built in 1842 at **264 Main Street (MHC #154)**, was the first place of worship for that society. The building is located on the former site of the garrison house of Reverend Gershom Hobart from the late 17th century. Reverend Hobart was the father of two children kidnapped by Native Americans in 1694. By the early 19th century Richardson's Tavern, a former stage stop and public gathering place, occupied the site. A group of 15-24 (sources conflict) Baptists, including deacons David Fosdick and Thomas Hutchins, formed a religious society in Groton in 1831 and began construction of the church in 1841. The building was dedicated February 2, 1842 according to Butler's history of the town.

The site of the Dr. Amos Bancroft House at **179 Main Street (MHC #148)** was in the late 17th and early 18th century the site of James Parker's garrison house and in the 1740s-1750s, the site of the shop of trader Jonathan Clark Lewis, whose house was located on a knoll that was dug away prior to construction of the existing house. F. M. Boutwell recounts that, among Groton's early settlers, James Parker was the richest man in town. Dr. Amos Bancroft Jr. returned to Groton in 1811 after attending medical school at Harvard (class of 1794) and living for a time in the town of Weston where he served as selectman, member of the school board, town moderator and greeter of President John Adams during his visit to that town in 1798. In 1847, Amos Jr. was taxed for ownership of a mansion house (an unusual designation but appropriate here) valued at \$7,500, more than the average house in town, plus three other houses and \$2,000 in stocks. Dr. Bancroft's father, Amos Bancroft Sr., is depicted as living across Main Street from this location on the 1832 and 1847 Butler maps although the house he occupied may have since been removed or demolished. By 1856, the owner appears to have been Amory Warren.

The Zara Patch House at **31 Hollis Street (MHC #27)** is a more modest example of the Greek Revival style in Groton Center and was built c. 1830 based on its appearance on the 1832 Butler map which does not indicate

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the name of the occupant. Mr. Patch, a blacksmith according to the 1888 resident directory and census records from 1855 and 1865, lived here until at least 1875 according to the Beers atlas from that year.

The **Chaplin School at 75 Hollis Street (MHC #137)**, now called the Laurence W. Gay America Legion Post 55, was built in 1869 and was at the time one of 14 public schools in town. The building was originally called District School #14 and named in 1874 for the Reverend Daniel Chaplin, Groton's First Parish minister from 1778 to 1825 and after the religious schism of 1826, the Congregationalist minister. First and second graders attended classes on the first floor while third and fourth graders occupied the second. Jennie Longley of Indian Hill Road was a teacher for over 30 years in the school, a function the two-room building served until 1914 when the last of the students from the old district schools were transferred to either the Boutwell school located across Hollis Street

The Groton Academy building, constructed in 1793, was enlarged between 1841-44 with wings on both sides of the foursquare, 2-story building. A projecting pavilion, bell tower, porches on the wings and a wrought and cast iron fence in front of Brazer, Dana and the school building were in place by c. 1850. The enlarged wood frame schoolhouse would fulfill its function for almost the entire period but burned in 1868 as a result of a mishap involving a firecracker on the Fourth of July. The name of the school was changed in the 1840s to commemorate the generous donations of alumni brothers named Lawrence. Amos and William Lawrence, residents of **2 and 44 Farmers Row (MHC #s 88 and 89)**, were prominent Groton natives, Boston importers and manufacturers of domestic goods and industrialists in the city of Lowell. Commercial buildings in Groton Center were built around the railroad station on Court Street. The former grain store at 28 Station Avenue is one such surviving building.

Late Industrial Period 1870-1915

Transportation routes remained largely unchanged in the village with the exception of the pavement applied to Main Street in 1902 from the Baptist Church to the house at 14 Main Street. Also, mile markers denoting the distance to Groton Center were placed in 25 locations in town in the same year. The number of residents remained around the 2,000 mark (after the separation of the town of Ayer on February 14, 1871) for the town at large and perhaps a quarter of that in and around the center. There was, however, an increase in the number of foreign born people, mostly Irish, to around 18%, although the bulk of these immigrants were probably living and working in Ayer, West Groton and Papermill Village where Main Street crosses the Nashua River.

Commercial activity in the Center continued at the previous scale with a variety of small retail operations and most industrial activity along the outlying rivers and streams. Farms in Groton Center, including that of Governor Boutwell, shipped thousands of baskets of fruit on the railroad to Lowell, Boston and elsewhere. Commerce probably experienced an increase in pace due to the installation of telephone service in 1881, the creation of the Groton Water Company in 1897 and the Groton Electric Light Department in 1909; the latter continues to occupy its original building at 23 Station Avenue. The Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women was established at **14 Main Street (MHC #20)** in 1902 by Mrs. Edward Gilchrist Low. One of the dormitories was designed by architects Little and Russell of Boston in 1928. Here she and

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her staff taught landscape architecture, gardening and horticulture to women until closing the doors in 1945 when the school was absorbed by the Rhode Island School of Design according to the Tercentenary Booklet. Also, the Groton Community Hospital was founded by Dr. Arthur Kilbourn on Main Street and endured here as a private institution until 1948. It was later replaced with a modern hospital built in 1953 on Fairview Avenue to the north.

A dramatic change to the collection of architectural resources on Main Street came in 1871 with the construction of the Butler High School and the Lawrence Academy classroom building. These were brick buildings of institutional scale with elements of the Gothic style. The Butler High School was built on the site of the current Prescott School by Benjamin F. Hartwell at **145 Main Street (MHC #147)** and stood until it was demolished in 1927 after being damaged by fire in 1925. The Lawrence Academy schoolroom building was built by Luther Blood, resident of **1 Powder House Road (MHC #143)**. This building replaced the original but altered 1793 Groton Academy Building on the same site. The 1871 building stood until 1956 when it too was destroyed by fire.

Architecture

Residential architecture exists from the period but did not appear in such quantities as during the Federal Period. **Bigelow Hall (MHC #178)** on the campus of Lawrence Academy was named for Honorable John Prescott Bigelow (1797-1872), an alumnus from c. 1814. Mr. Bigelow went on to become a state representative in 1828, Massachusetts secretary of state in 1836 and mayor of Boston in 1849-51. He is interred in the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. The building was built as a dormitory for Lawrence Academy Students, a function it continues to perform. The house at **11 Lowell Road (MHC #12)** was built as a Federal style residence for Major Thomas Gardner in 1783 and was remodeled with Second Empire features around 1855 by a subsequent owner, Charles Harrison Waters. State census records from 1865 show he was a manufacturer, 37 years of age. Mr. Waters was a wealthy man with \$3,000 in income and \$2,800 in bonds as well as a house, barn, valuable furniture and carriages. His estate was taxed in 1889 for possession of a machine shop which may be the current outbuilding on the property. Mr. Waters filed claims for patents with the U. S. Patent Office for manufacture of a machine to paint wire cloth (window screens) in 1868 and to improve the process of weaving wire cloth in 1862. This was in conjunction with his company, Clinton Wire Cloth Co. in Clinton, Ma. He also invented machinery for making rope and twine, opened Groton's telegraph office in 1881, but died at the age of 54 in 1883 of a stroke while superintending the construction of the Avery Lactart Company (Boston-based makers of a soft drink called acid milk in the 1880s) building in Littleton, Ma. Mr. Waters' son Frank lived in the house in 1888 according to the resident directory from that year and worked as a machinist, probably with the machinery listed in the 1889 tax records that included a steam engine, machinery and a steam boat. A subsequent owner was the wealthy Charles E. Bigelow c. 1910. Mr. Waters' daughter Yssabella, formerly of New York, bought the house around 1921. She was a nurse, author and social worker in New York City, Florida, St. Louis, Havana and Baltimore. Prior to her death in 1938, she willed the house to Lawrence Academy.

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John G. Park (b. c. 1801) received the house at **36 Main Street (MHC #19)** in 1829 as a wedding gift from his father, the stone mason and builder, Stuart J. Park (b. 1773). The builder, according to May, was Captain Peter Nutting, who built two others with the identical plan nearby, possibly at **47 Main Street (MHC #18)**. The house was originally located on the west side of Main Street, had a single chimney and was painted white according to Caleb Butler's field notes from 1829-30. Subsequent owner and grandson of John G. Park, the architect Lawrence Park had the house moved in 1906 across the street and up the hill, enlarged the floorplan adding bays to the facade, altered the roof from a gabled to hipped form and added dormers, resulting in Classical Revival alteration of the Federal style house which comprised 2/3 of new house. The long winding driveway and the hilltop setting are also recognizable as Colonial Revival features. Lawrence Park was an architect who belonged to a Boston cultural institution named the Anthology Society and for whom he drew recreations of Boston streetscapes of the Federal Period. Lawrence Park had offices on Beacon Street in Boston from at least 1905 - 1929, lived in the house with his wife Minna until his death when it was conveyed to his daughter and son in law, Mr. and Mrs. George T. Skinner who occupied the property until at least 1977. The house became part of the Lawrence Academy campus c. 2000 and is now the residence of the headmaster and his family. The former carriage house, also built c. 1829, remains across the street at **27 Main Street (MHC #21)**.

Construction of the **Groton Public Library at 99 Main Street (MHC #146)** was completed in 1893 according to plans drawn by Harvard and MIT-trained Boston architect Arthur Rotch (1850-1894) of Rotch and Tilden, and under the supervision of builder Charles H. Dodge. The construction was the culmination of decades of effort by local residents to obtain a building to function specifically as a library. In 1854, Abbott Lawrence, ambassador to the Court of St. James, namesake of Lawrence Academy, founder of textile mills in the Massachusetts city that bears his name and grandfather of the architect, donated \$500, voted unanimously at town meeting in March 1854 to be matched by the town, for the creation of a public library which, once established, was kept in a store at the corner of Main Street and Station Avenue, later in Town Hall and still later in Liberty Hall, formerly located at Main and Court Streets (burned 1878, after which, the library returned to Town Hall). In 1891, Mrs. Charlotte Sibley (1819-1902), tenant at **98 Main Street (MHC #24)** donated the current lot of land and \$4000 for a library if the town would agree to raise \$15000. The building was dedicated on May 18, 1893. The 1899 Report of the Free Public Library Commission indicates funding was by annual appropriation and from proceeds of the dog tax. The local author Helen McCarthy Sawyer was one of many prominent local trustees and notes that the interior was remodeled in 1910 and wired for lights in 1911, the Sibley Hall was put to use as a children's room in 1929 and windows were added and the stacks lowered in 1955, the stacks having previously been accessible only to the librarian. The major rear addition was completed c. 1995. The building that occupied the parcel prior to the library's construction was said to have been a 17th century house that was moved in 1893 to Broadmeadow Road where the top floor became the house at 16 Broadmeadow and the bottom floor became the house at 18 Broadmeadow Road.

The first Catholic Church in Groton was located in 1858 in the former industrial village of South Groton and now the town of Ayer. Sufficient numbers of Catholics, mostly Irish immigrants, had moved to the northern part of town around Groton Center by 1890 that the priest from the Ayer parish said a mass in a vacant schoolhouse starting around that time. After construction of a new chapel in 1899, the Groton School was

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unable to make use of its older chapel so the original chapel's donor, Groton School teacher and nephew of art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner, William Amory Gardner, again donated the 1884 building, this time to the Catholics of Groton. It was moved on rollers in September, 1904 to the current site at **297 Main Street (MHC #XX)** and consecrated by Archbishop John Williams in October, 1905. The first permanent priest, Charles Finnegan, arrived in 1907. By 1955, the church had 500 parishioners, a number that increased through much of the 20th century.

Early Modern Period 1915-1945

Transportation routes in Groton Center experienced little development and some reversals during the period. Specifically, passenger service on the railroad declined between 1915 and 1934 from around 12 trains per day to zero. The cessation of passenger service came two years after the destruction by fire of the railroad station, although freight service continued into the 1960s. Residential development also slowed in the center village, there being very few buildings on this section of Main Street from the period. Small scale commercial activity continued in the area throughout the period with some businesses surviving until the present day such as Moison's Hardware which began on Hollis Street, moved to the site of 171 Main Street and then to 159 Main in 1944 before building a new building in c. 1990 at 143 Main Street. May and Hally Co. was founded as a trucking company in the 1920s and now provides heating fuel services from their shop at 36 Court Street. The Buckingham Bus Company began operations in 1912 at 40 Station Avenue and remains at the same location. Other businesses included the gift shop run by Carrie Nutting at **134 Main Street (MHC #10)** in the 1920s which also contained a tea room, a popular early form of roadside restaurant; a First National Store selling groceries at the site of 171 Main Street; Boynton's Bakery and Tainter's Grocery store were nearby on Main Street in the 1920's; Kitchener's Drug Store and Peabody's bicycle and watch store were across the street from each other on Court Street in the 1920s and 1930s; an ice cream parlor run by Mrs. Batman existed on Pleasant Street; the Woods Block at 30 Hollis Street, built in the 1890s, contained a meat market, yarn shop, radio dealer and a dressmaker.

Architecture from the period includes a high style residential example in the Classical Revival style with a foursquare plan at 17 School Street. A larger and more prominent building from 1928 is the Classical Revival style brick **Prescott School at 145 Main Street (MHC # 147)** which continues to function as such today. Built as a high school according to plans by architects Haynes and Mason of Fitchburg, the building replaced the High Victorian Gothic style Caleb Butler High School, built in 1871, damaged by fire in 1925 and later demolished and replaced with the current school. The Odd Fellows Building at 20 Station Avenue was built in 1915 according to designs by architect D. H. Woodbury and listed as a music hall by the Department of Public Safety in their Fire Safety Records. This was reused in 1940 as the fire station and remodeled by architect James T. Bennett.

Additional resources from the period include the Spaulding-Stearns Athletic Field, acquired by Lawrence Academy in 1940. This acquisition came 23 years after the private college preparatory school closed from 1918-1921 for lack of funds. A bandstand was erected on the Town Common in the late 19th century but was removed to the Groton Fairgrounds in 1916 and a replacement constructed in its place. The former Chaplin

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School at **75 Hollis Street (MHC #137)** was adapted for use as the Laurence W. Gay American Legion Post #55 in 1919. The Boutwell School was built of yellow brick at 78 Hollis Street in 1914 and marked the end of the district school system in Groton. The architects were W. H. and Henry McLean. Previously, the town's 14 district schools, including Chaplin, operated in one-room buildings except in the center and in West Groton which had larger schools. The children in outlying districts were subsequently bussed to the modern central facilities. The wayside pulpit on the Unitarian Common in front of the First Parish Church was put up in 1918 and remains in place. The Governor Boutwell House at **172 Main Street (MHC #4)** was willed to the Groton Historical Society by its former owner and daughter of the governor, Miss Georgianna Boutwell, in 1933. It continues to function as a museum.

Modern Period 1945-1970

Developments in transportation routes through the area as well as in construction of residential and commercial buildings slowed in the mid 20th century. The Lawrence Academy expanded its campus along Powderhouse Road beginning in the 1940s to areas west and south of the original school building located until 1956 between Brazer House and Dana House. Fire destroyed the 1871 Gothic style brick school building, the site of which remains unoccupied. A new school building was constructed in 1956 at the top of Powderhouse Road and created a new focal point for the campus. The architect was Arland A. Diram. The Lowthorpe School at **14 Main Street (MHC #20)** closed its doors in 1945 and was merged with the Rhode Island School of Design. In its place in 1947 were the convent, novitiate and Holy Union and Sacred Heart Country Day School, a school that continues to occupy the historic house at 14 Main Street and the surrounding modern school buildings. Another school-related development came in 1960 with the town meeting vote to build a new high school north of the center and to use the Prescott School at **145 Main Street (MHC #147)** as a junior high school. (Prescott now serves as a grade school.) Losses to the center's collection of historic architecture during the period included the demolition of the blacksmith shop at 195 Main Street and its replacement with a gas station. This and other such changes contributed to the establishment in 1964 of the Groton Historic Districts Commission which has oversight of the treatment of the exteriors of buildings between 14 and 280 Main Street, School Street, Powderhouse Road and on the southern part of Hollis Street. This secures for the town center a high degree of preservation of the abundant historic residential, commercial and institutional architecture and will maintain the historical associations with Groton's past.

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Walker, George H. Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Boston: 1889. Available at the Massachusetts State Library, Special Collections.Walling, H. F. Middlesex County. Map. 1856. Available in files of the local historical society.Whipple, Alan. Academy Days. Groton, Ma: Published by the author. 1985.Works Progress Administration. Groton. Map. 1939. Available at the State Archives.**X** Recommended as a National Register Historic District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement Form.*

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district

Potential historic district **X**

Criteria: **X** A B **X** C D

Criteria considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of significance by: Sanford Johnson

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Groton Center Area is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a district under criteria A and C. Its significance is at the local level. The buildings' historical associations with farmers in Groton, as well as governmental, educational and religious activities further their significance and establish the area's eligibility under Criterion A. At least one house exists that was built during the 17th century as well as numerous 18th century houses. Civic buildings include the 1755 First Parish Church, the 1827 Congregational Church, the 1842 former Baptist Church and the 1859 Town Hall. The Old Burying Ground remains in its original location near the first meetinghouse site. The buildings, structures and landscape retain significant architectural elements of 18th, 19th and early 20th century design which contribute to the historical character of the area and make it eligible under Criterion C. Elements of the Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic and Colonial Revival styles are in evidence. The buildings and landscape retain integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.

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Sketch Map North Toward Top



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South View near 264 Main Street



South View near 205 Main Street

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East View near 208, 214 Main Street



East View of Gibbet Hill from Main Street

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South View including Town Hall and 179 Main Street



South View including 172 and 164 Main Street

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South View of 11 Lowell Road and First Parish Church



South View near 95 Main Street

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North View near 40, 46 and 52 Hollis Street



North View near 16, 20 and 24 Hollis Street

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North View, 31-51 Hollis Street



South View of 78 and 75 Hollis Street

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West View of 17 and 25 School Street



East View, 33, 37 and 45 School Street

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North View near 39 Station Avenue



East View near 36, 30 and 26 Court Street

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West View near 16 and 20 Court Street