

**FORM A - AREA**

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area  
113, 114, 115, 116 17-19, 143, 145, 149, 177,  
178, 344, 345, 460

**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:** Lawrence Academy

**Current Use:** College preparatory school

**Construction Dates or Period:** 1782-2004

**Overall Condition:** Good - excellent

**Major Intrusions and Alterations:** Multiple modern  
buildings, 1793 school building burned 1868; 1871  
School Building burned 1956; replaced 1957

**Acreage:** Approximately 102

**Recorded by:** Sanford Johnson

**Organization:** Groton Historical Commission

**Date (Month/Year):** 1/09

**Sketch Map**

**X** *See continuation sheet*

## AREA FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

#### Introduction

The campus of the Lawrence Academy at Groton, founded during a meeting of local residents in 1792 and incorporated in 1793, contains over a dozen historic buildings including three high style Federal Period residences that flanked the original schoolhouse, an 1863 Second Empire style brick dormitory, 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian residences in use as dormitories and offices as well as school buildings from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are located primarily on the Powderhouse Road campus as well as along both sides of the southern part of Main Street. Playing fields extend as far east as Lovers Lane and to the west of Main Street. Landscape elements include the campus quadrangle on Powderhouse Road which is formed by the three principal school buildings. The multiple parcels comprise approximately 100 acres and contain around 25 buildings. The original school building from 1793 (burned in 1868) and the successor from 1868 (burned 1956) faced Main Street between the 1792 Dana and 1802 Brazer Houses, the school's two oldest architectural resources. The site of the schoolhouse is now vacant.

#### Selected Descriptions

Dana House at **86 Main Street (MHC #23)** is a refined Federal style design built in 1793 and located on an elevated site that lends prominence to the house that is now housing for Lawrence Academy teachers and also serves as the health center. 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.

Brazer House, built 1802 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 two stories may have been an early 20<sup>th</sup> century addition; a second ell was built in the late 1990s.

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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.

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 Waters House dormitory built c. 1782 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. The core is of Federal style proportions and was altered with Second Empire details c. 1860. 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

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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.

**Bigelow Hall at 12 Powderhouse Road** (MHC #178), a girls' dormitory at Lawrence Academy, is a 2 1/2-story, 7x2-bay Second Empire style brick building. Distinctive features are the slate shingled Mansard roof with four dormer windows across the façade, the cornice with paired brackets and modillions, and the central pavilion that projects slightly from the façade and contains the central three bays. Windows are 2/2 double-hung sash; those in the façade have segmental arched tops done in brick and brackets below the stone sills. The central window in the second story has a round top with brick arch; windows in the dormers have flat roofs, cornices and scrolled side details. The slightly recessed center entry has a segmental arched hood built of brick. Above the door and below the round top window is the plaque containing the name and date of the building: "Bigelow Hall/1863". The unique Second Empire design in brick and the institutional scale give the building its significance

The Lawrence Academy Alumni Development House at **61 Powderhouse Road** (MHC #46) is a 2 1/2-story, 3x2-bay, side-gabled form with elements of the Italianate style. The plan of the main block of the house is enlarged by the open front porch with jigsaw brackets and slim posts on the west elevation, the rear shed addition and by the attached barn and ell on the south gable end. The house is articulated by the corner pilasters, gable returns and the molded cornice with deep eaves and modillions. Windows are mainly 6/6 double hung units with prominent hoods; those on the first story of the façade and north side elevations are triple hung units. The main entry has plain trim including sidelights. Corbelled brick chimneys rise from the ridge and the east slope of the roof. The attached barn is a gable-roofed form oriented perpendicular to the main block and clad in wood clapboard with a vehicle door now enclosed with a pedestrian entry and 2 double-hung windows in the west elevation. The barn, which is connected to the house by a 2-story gabled ell, has a perpendicular gabled addition at the south end wall. The house and barn are well-maintained and retain integrity of design. The scale and materials of the house is typical for Groton Center. The barn, currently a faculty residence, is approximately 20'x40' and is the sole example on the Lawrence Academy campus.

The Greek Revival style Wells-Ebert House at **39 Powderhouse Road** (MHC #149) is a side-gabled, 6x3-bay, 2 1/2-story form with a one-story hipped porch over the west side elevation. This was called the Dr. Samuel A. Green House for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although he lived at 154 Main Street and in Boston. A plain gabled entry hood exists over the principal south-facing entry which has sidelights and cornice. A two-story addition has been made to the east gable end and a one-story gabled ell has been added to the north (rear) elevation. Decorative features consist of the classical surround at the center entry, closed gable, molded cornice and corner boards; and Doric columns support the cornice of the hipped porch. Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash with triple hung units in the first story of the west gable end and a 6/6 sash with sidelights in the west gable peak. A band of four mulled windows has been installed in the eastern end of the first story of the façade which has asymmetrical fenestration, suggesting some series of additions after original construction. Two tall brick chimneys occupy the west end of the gabled roof while 2 additional lower

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chimneys rise from the ridge farther east. The house is in good condition and has been adapted for use from a resident to a student dormitory on the Lawrence Academy campus.

Loomis House, at **77 Main Street** (MHC #145), is a Queen Anne style design of 3x3 bays and two and one half stories tall with a ridge-hipped roof and a nearly square plan. Secondary masses include the gabled dormers on the front and sides as well as an octagonal tower at the northeast corner; canted corners articulate the edges of the façade. Windows are mainly 1/1 double hung sash with a Queen Anne sash in the third story of the tower and a tripartite sash in the front dormer. The main entry in the façade is covered by an open gable porch supported by paired square columns on plinth blocks. A hipped porch supported by square columns on plinth blocks covers most of the south elevation and the secondary entry. Details include the scroll cut ornament under the canted soffit at the corners of the façade, deep eaves, molded cornice and the locally unusual octahedral roof clad in slate, also locally rare. The detached carriage barn, now in use as a garage, is a side-gabled, wood clapboard form of two stories with flared shingles in the gable ends, a gabled dormer in the center of the east slope and a pyramidal ventilator with square base in the center of the roof ridge. Like the house, the barn roof is clad in slate shingles. The barn is more ornate than most others in Groton center although it is relatively small

The F. G. Lawrence House at **11 Powderhouse Road**, now a school dormitory, is a Colonial Revival style foursquare form of two stories and three by two bays. The deck hipped roof is a prominent feature and, on the principal elevation, meets the gabled roof over the projecting central bay. A flat-roofed porch supported by Doric columns covers the center entry. Windows are typically 2/1 double-hung sash except for the oculus in the gable peak. Decorative features include the modillions at the eaves, molded cornice and denticulated trim at the cornice of the porch. A two-story addition has been made to the rear of the main block and has a shed roof.

Pillsbury House at **45 Powderhouse Road** is a front-gabled Italianate design of two and one half stories and two by four bays with a two-story ell off the west side elevation. Decorative elements are the prominent brackets at the eaves, gable returns and paneled pilasters. The off-center entry is trimmed with a bracketed cornice and paneled pilasters as well sidelights flanking the door. Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash (extended in length on the first story) with slim hoods above except for the paired double hung 4/4 units in the front gable peak. The six by two-bay ell has plain trim and appears to have been a later addition. Pillsbury House, originally a residence and now a student dormitory, was moved in 1966 from its original location on Powderhouse Road where the Ferguson Building is now located.

Sheedy Faculty Building at **48 Powderhouse Road** was originally a residence and converted to use as faculty housing. The design has elements of the locally rare French Colonial style seen in the ridge hipped roof and segmental arched center entry porch. The three by two bay, two-story form of the main block are expanded by the two story ell on the north side elevation. Windows are typically 2/2 double hung sash except for the triple sash over the center entry which have quarrel panes. The center bay with the triple sash and the main entry projects slightly from the façade. Three prominent brick chimneys rise from near the center of the main block and from the ridge of the ell roof.

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A plaque near the front entrance of the brick **School House (26 Powderhouse Road)** ascribes a construction date of 1957. The architect, Arlan Dirlam, described his design (for this as well as his Gray and Ferguson Buildings which form the remainder of the campus quadrangle) as Georgian and it may also be considered to be in the style of Colonial Revival. The seven bay façade of the two story design has at its center a semi-circular colossal portico supported by four Doric columns and a front gabled secondary block attached by a low vestibule set back from the façade at the north end. The main block is a side-gabled form of five bays and is expanded at the end walls with flat roofed wings of one bay each. The center of the roof ridge is occupied by the octagonal bell turret which is articulated with the octagonal bell roof clad in gold leaf, eight square columns supporting the roof and entablature, the square base with decorative urns at the corners. A weathervane in the shape of an arrow rests atop the whole. Massive brick chimneys mark the gable ends of the central block of the school house. Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash with tripartite examples in the end bays of the façade. The center entry under the semi-circular portico has classical trim in the form of pilasters, entablature and transom. Windows under the portico appear to be fixed sash with larger panes. Also located here near the ceiling of the portico is the school name on a granite tablet from the Main Street façade of the 1871 predecessor building. Additional details includes the molded cornice, granite stringcourse at the foundation/wall junction and rows of soldier bricks above the windows arranged in imitation of a flat arch. The large secondary mass containing an assembly hall and expanding the plan at the north end is a part of the original building design. The front gabled form matches the School Building in height and style of detail. The façade is dominated by the expansive window that rises almost two stories and contains multiple fixed sash and classically derived pilasters and entablature. Detail is simple but prominent in the form of overly broad corner pilasters in brick that support oversize gable returns. The gable peak is ornamented with molded cornice and the school insignia, a lamp and the words "Omnibus Lucet", flanked by swags. The School Building faces west toward the Quadrangle which is enclosed by the Ansin Building (2004), Ferguson Building (1968) and Gray Building (1949), all of which bear a similarity of style, form, scale and detail that contributes to the architectural ensemble of the campus core

The two-story brick **Ferguson Building at 17 Powderhouse Road** was built on a cross-gabled plan in 1968 and houses the school library with stage facilities in the basement level and the 2007 Mees-Richardson Performing Arts Center attached to the east elevation. Like the School House, Ferguson has elements of the Colonial Revival. The building's architect was again Arlan Dirlam who described his design as Georgian. The principal elevation is oriented toward the north, overlooking the school Quadrangle and with a view of the 2004 Ansin Academic Building to the south. The main entry is under the pedimented end of the façade at the west end of the building. Flanked by paired, colossal Doric columns, the doorway has classical trim with a broken pediment and ornamental urn above. Sidelights and an oculus light the entry and the façade under the pediment. The roof ridge of the pedimented section supports the belvedere with its octagonal bell roof and arcaded cornice which rises from a square base articulated with decorative urns at the corners. The six-bay side-gabled portion of the library is west of the main entry and presents a brick elevation of two stories toward the Quadrangle. Openings in the western section of the elevation contain sash with panes arranged in a 12 / 20 / 16 pattern. The broad molded cornice refers to the other academic buildings that surround the Quadrangle.

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Like the Ferguson Building, the **Gray Building at 25 Powderhouse Road** is built on a cross-gabled plan with the main entrance under the pediment facing the Quadrangle. The building's architect, as for the School House and Ferguson Building, was Arlan Dirlam who described the style of his design as Georgian. The gabled pavilion, directly across the Quadrangle from the 1957 School Building entrance, projects from the principal elevation, contains the main entry and is supported by square columns. An entablature and raking cornice trim the tympanum which contains the school seal flanked by festoons. The main entry is recessed and has a broken pediment with urn above and secondary doorways on either side which are also recessed. All have ornamental transoms with what appears to be leaded art glass windows. Five bays leading to the north contain large multiple pane sash that light the remainder of the west facing elevation overlooking the Quadrangle. The height of the roof reflects the space inside was built as a gymnasium and is now in use as performing arts space. A three bay block projects to the south of the pavilion and has a lower roofline to reflect the more personal nature of the student lounge space within. Like the Ferguson and School Buildings, the Gray Building roof is the location of an octagonal structure with weathervane which in this case contains a carillon.

### Landscape

The core of the Lawrence Academy campus is located on Powderhouse Road (originally called High Street or Academy Hill) which is parallel to and overlooking Main Street. The Quadrangle is bounded by three academic buildings built between 1946 and 2004. The high ground of the Quad slopes down to the south end of Main Street on the west and down to Lovers Lane to the east. Main Street is the location of several former residences now in use as dormitories and teacher housing. Lovers Lane is a dirt road that separates the main campus from athletic fields and the Peabody Cottage (built 1895 for employees of the Mountain Family Farm), the school's easternmost building. The Spaulding – Stearns Playing Fields mark the western edge of campus and are across Main Street from the academy.

### Conclusion/Comparison

Groton is the site of two other private schools besides Lawrence Academy – The Country Day School of the Holy Union (Formerly the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women) at 14 Main Street which is a private Catholic grade school and Groton School on Farmers Row, a private college preparatory school with a mission similar to Lawrence Academy. Lawrence has a number of historic buildings (mainly dormitories built as residences) as part of the campus although the core academic buildings are in many cases less than 60 years old. An exception is Bigelow Hall, built as a dormitory in 1863. Groton School's campus contains at its core a larger number of landmark quality historic academic buildings than Lawrence, some from the time of its founding in 1884 and some slightly later. The Groton School campus is focused around an Frederick Law Olmsted designed landscape, a feature that is unique among Groton's private schools. Both the prep schools are larger than The Country Day School of the Holy Union and contain more significant architectural and landscape features, although the original use of the Country Day School campus and some of the surviving buildings was to teach landscape architecture to women in the first half of the 1900s which

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makes the site unique in Groton. While Lawrence Academy trails Groton School in the number of historic academic buildings and does not possess the unique mission of the former Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women, it remains Groton's first private school and one of the nation's oldest at over 215 years of age.

The Lawrence Academy campus contains a combination of historic and modern architecture built from 1793-2004. Approximately 9 were constructed mainly in brick at an institutional scale for use as school facilities during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and later. Four modern residences were built for faculty housing at the southeast corner of campus c. 1995. Approximately 18 buildings were built as residences and adapted for use as dormitories, faculty housing or other facilities. The historic buildings constitute an impressive collection of designs from the Federal through the Early Modern Periods and are generally in good to excellent condition. The group of modern buildings, the core of which were designed by one architect with respect to the strong Federal Period influence evidenced elsewhere on the campus and in the town center, do an excellent job of blending with the historic designs.

**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**

The Lawrence Academy at Groton (originally named Groton Academy) was conceived at a 1792 meeting of local residents interested in creating increased secondary educational opportunities and opened in 1793 as a private academy through a program of combined public and private subscription. It was one of several established in the region around this time, including nearby Westford Academy which was granted incorporation at the same legislative session. The initial facility for teaching was a district schoolhouse located on Farmers Row. The initial academy building was completed in December, 1793 at the site of the current LA locational sign on Main Street (between Brazer and Dana Houses, MHC #s 24 and 23). Both this and the successor building on the same site were destroyed by separate fires in 1868 and 1956. The site of the first and second school buildings is now vacant. The school name was changed in 1846 to honor the major financial and material support of two brothers - the Boston merchants, industrialists and Groton Academy alumni Amos and William Lawrence. Campus expansion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century moved the core of the school to the south and east with Powderhouse Road forming the principal axis that divides the campus roughly in half. While several historic former residences on Main Street, Lowell Road and Powderhouse Road are included as part of the campus, the main academic buildings were built in the Colonial Revival style during and after the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. All aspects of the history of the school, including teacher names, prominent alumni, physical development and curricula are extremely well documented in the books The History of Lawrence Academy at Groton 1792-1992, written by LA alumnus Douglas Frank and Academy Days/Groton Days by the late LA teacher Alan Whipple. Dr. Samuel Green and Caleb Butler, two Groton historians writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also recorded a great deal of information. The bulk of this narrative is derived from those works.



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**Colonial Period 1675-1775**

During the Colonial Period, a powderhouse was located near the southern end of the road of the same name, approximately across from the Ebert House (39 Powderhouse Road). The magazine was enlarged in 1777 by order of the state legislature and Board of War to hold 500 barrels of powder, although the contents were later moved to Billerica, Woburn and Concord. Construction was probably of stone, around 12' square. Virginia May notes in her book Groton Houses that the building was demolished c. 1829 and the materials were used for lining a well near the First Parish Church. The powderhouse was on land owned by Captain Benjamin Bancroft, donor of land for the academy in 1793. The First Parish Church and the common separating it from Main Street served as the focal point of the village by this time.

**Federal Period 1775-1830**

The association to create an academy in Groton was formed on March 26, 1792 by residents who were Revolutionary War veterans, ministers, deacons, lawyers, doctors, storekeepers, farmers and innkeepers. Several were alumni of Harvard University and Governor Dummer Academy (now Governors Academy, founded in 1763, the first school of the kind that boarded students on the property). The relief of distress caused by war and financial privation combined with the increase of political stability, manufacture and commerce after the Revolution promoted a general interest in the cause of education (male and female, although only males were expected to attend college) and to create a higher standard of culture. The founding document reads in part "In Order to diffuse useful knowledge and render the means of Instruction & Information more general & less expensive to Individuals, We agree to raise by Subscription in Shares at five pounds Each, a sum of Money for the purpose of Erecting a Suitable building for an Academy in the Town of Groton within sixty Rods from the Public Meeting house in the first Parish of said Town..." As the result of a vote at town meeting, the town of Groton itself was among the list of initial investors. The act of the Massachusetts Legislature that granted incorporation to the Groton Academy, dated September 28, 1793, cites the encouragement of literature among the rising generation as wise and good.

The historian Dr. Samuel Green quotes Sarah (Chaplin) Rockwood, a c. 1805 alumna, as saying the first classes in the spring of 1793 were held in the district schoolhouse on Farmers Row; under the charge of teacher Samuel Holyoke. Construction of the first School Building began in the autumn of 1792 and was completed around a year later. One quarter acre of land was donated by Benjamin Bancroft Jr. The building was two stories high, 40'x30' and without paint or plaster. It was supposed to have resembled those at Andover and Exeter in size and appearance. The historian Whipple notes several individuals who were supposed to have been involved in the construction including the mason and gravestone cutter John Park, clerk of the works Simeon Gilson, lead carpenter Peletiah Russell, and sawyer or carpenter William Nutting, all of Groton. The floor plan consisted of an open porch across the front of the first story, one class room with separate entry, the preceptor's room and wood room downstairs and class room, recitation room, wood room and clothes room on the second floor. The exterior form was foursquare with a pyramidal hipped roof and cupola. Classes in the school house commenced December 30, 1793.

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Students numbered 115 in 1794 and ranged in age from 8-27 years. There were 37 students in 1795, five in 1798, 52 in 1800 and 35 in 1801. Most college bound graduates attended Harvard University while the second largest contingent went to Dartmouth. A total of 39 went to colleges throughout New England in the period 1794-1801. Given the relatively small amount of money raised at the outset, it is not surprising the school was closed in 1797 for lack of funds (the first of several such instances). The school debt was reduced by donations of Deacon Samuel Lawrence, father of the academy's namesakes, William and Amos Lawrence. Dane's Law was passed by the Massachusetts legislature in 1797 to provide a grant of land to newly established academies requesting state aid. Groton Academy, along with Dummer, Phillips and Westford, received a grant of a half township (6 miles square) in the district of Maine, then part of Massachusetts. Groton Academy sold its parcel of land, located near the town of Houlton, in 1799 and earned around \$4,700 by the sale which funded interior plaster and the exterior paint. It had the further effect of solidifying the financial condition of the school for several decades, the endowment increasing regularly through the early 1800s. In the 1820s, bequests and gifts to the school began to arrive. Mrs. Hannah Brazer, southerly neighbor to the academy and occupant of Brazer House, bequeathed \$500 in 1825, to be disbursed after her death which occurred shortly afterward.

**Early Industrial Period 1830-1870**

The Early Industrial Period was for Groton Academy a time of growth and development. The campus and its buildings were enlarged and improved, partly as a result of the destruction by fire of the 1793 school building. More importantly, the school received a series of financial and materials gifts that, while not preventing additional short term suspensions of classes, is largely responsible for the continued existence of the institution.

Although classes were suspended again in 1835 for financial reasons, the following year school trustees spent \$2,000 for the Dana House (adjacent to the north of the academy building) which served as the teachers' residence until at least 1847. Brazer House to the south, purchased for the academy by Amos Lawrence in 1846, became the principal's residence.

The original wood school building was remodeled twice over a short period. The first effort was in the summer of 1841 and the second in the autumn of 1846 when it was much enlarged. The 1841 remodeling involved a rear addition funded by Amos Lawrence when he also paid for improvements on the grounds and for a fence consisting of stone posts and chains. During this time, classes were held in the town hall which was then located in the lower floor of the Unitarian Church. A floorplan reproduced in Whipple shows the proposed addition of a library on the rear of the first floor, second recitation room above the library and adjacent water closet c. 1840. Samuel W. Rowe, later the builder of the Groton Town Hall in 1859, performed the 1841 alterations and additions. In August, 1846, the academy received \$5,000 from William Lawrence for enlarging the schoolhouse, erecting a stone and iron fence in front of the buildings and buying a bell for the schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was enlarged to 70' in length, according to Butler, with wings on either side elevation; the fence was 340' long. The fence was designed by Groton historian, academy preceptor and lawyer and surveyor Caleb Butler. Plans for the second addition were drawn by architect Isaiah Rogers

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according to school historian Douglas Frank and to Roger's own diaries where he notes a member of his staff drew a perspective plan of the school at the request of William Lawrence between August 25 and 27, 1846 (The plan is not known to exist). Rogers was responsible for designing the Astor House hotel in New York City and the US Treasury, among many other high profile projects.

Amos Lawrence, Groton Academy alumnus and son of founder and benefactor Samuel Lawrence, donated books and philosophical apparatus to the academy in 1838. In 1839 he donated a telescope and additional books; In 1842, he donated \$2,000 to enlarge the school building. In 1844, alumnus William Lawrence, Amos' brother and business partner, gave \$10,000 for paying teachers and helping graduates afford college, specifically stating it should be done not with regard to sectarian views. The trustees vowed to have portraits or busts created of Amos and William and placed in the academy to be preserved as memorials. In 1845, Amos Lawrence gave additional volumes and two 8-day clocks, one for the upper and one for the lower room of the schoolhouse. At a meeting on August 20, 1845, the trustees voted to change the name of the school to The Lawrence Academy at Groton. The state legislature granted the petition in 1846, the same year that Amos Lawrence bought the Brazer Estate (the house south of the schoolhouse) and donated it to the academy. At the same time, Amos donated \$1,200 for improving the fences and buildings. In 1848, William left \$20,000 by will to the academy. It is due to the generosity of the Lawrence brothers that the academy survived and began to prosper.

Bigelow Hall was built as a dormitory in the fall of 1863 and opened March, 1864. Its namesake was John Prescott Bigelow, an academy alumnus, Harvard educated lawyer, state representative, Secretary of State of Massachusetts from 1836-43 and mayor of Boston from 1848-1851 and the son of Timothy Bigelow, an original academy trustee. Bigelow Hall was designed by Boston architect Thomas Silloway (designer of the Vermont State Capitol among many other New England Public buildings) and built by G. S. Adams of Boston; it opened in September, 1863.

The 1793 schoolhouse burned down on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1868 as the result of a mishap with a firecracker. With the Rogers-designed building were burned the vast collection of literary, historical and scientific volumes, scientific apparatus and the clocks donated by the Lawrence brothers. Classes were held in Bigelow Hall until the summer of 1869 and then suspended until March of 1871.

**Late Industrial Period 1870-1915**

The period 1870-1915 was marked by greater stability in terms of financial and physical development. The new school building, completed in brick in 1871 to architectural designs by Lawrence Academy alumnus Henry M. Francis of Fitchburg, was a three-story brick building with elements of the Second Empire style including the high level of architectural detail and Mansard roof. The complex plan was enlarged by a projecting three-story pavilion in the center of the west facing façade that contained an entry porch. The new school building was dedicated June 29, 1871. The builder was John B. Wood with Luther Blood, resident of Powderhouse Road, performing some work.

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Having admitted girls since its inception, the board of trustees saw fit to limit admissions to boys after 1899. This may have been related to the fact that the school closed after the 1899 graduation due to financial difficulties. The decision to admit only boys was in spite of the fact that Kate Isabelle Mann had acted as preceptor or principal from 1897-1898, the only female to have done so.

**Early Modern Period 1915-1945**

Financial difficulties that had beset the academy since its founding reemerged in the Early Modern Period, resulting in the school's closure from 1918 until the autumn of 1922. Upon the death of Dr. Samuel Green, town historian, academy alumnus and trustee, former Boston mayor and descendant of previous Lawrence benefactors, his will bequeathed \$350,000 (including his residence at 154 Main Street) to the school which provided for its future operating costs. The 1922 catalog states the academy was "Re-established on the Samuel A. Green Foundation." According to Frank's history, despite the school's closure for lack of money, the trustees were somehow able to buy the Motley House (Now the Sheedy Faculty Building) in 1920. Until some time after 1906, the road that now forms the main artery of the campus was called High Street (visible as such on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps). By 1918, the name had been changed to Powderhouse Road according to the resident directory from that year. This road name had previously referred to just the segment that climbs Academy Hill from Main Street to access the Powderhouse that was demolished in the 1820s.

Other additions to the physical plant were the 1908 F. G. Lawrence House at 13 Powderhouse Road, purchased, 1924; the Spaulding Stearns Playing Fields (located across Main Street), purchased, 1937; Sheedy House in 1923 and Robbins House in 1928 (These buildings, demolished in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, were nearly matching Second Empire style residences from c. 1870 near the current location of the Ferguson Building); the 1793 Waters House at 11 Lowell Road (remodeled with Second Empire details including the Mansard Roof c. 1870) received as a bequest in 1938; the c. 1850 Pillsbury House in 1942 (This was moved across campus in 1966 to its current location from a site near the Ferguson Building). The Pillsbury house was built in the early 1850s, and bought from Miss Jennie Thayer in July, 1942. It was used a dorm starting in 1949 when it was dedicated to Alfred Enoch Pillsbury, member of the class of 1867, member of the Buildings and Grounds and Executive Committees in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, President of the Board of Trustees starting in 1918, LA valedictorian, Harvard alumnus, lawyer, state representative from 1876-79, state senator from 1884-1887 and Attorney General of Massachusetts from 1891-1893.

**Modern Period 1945-2000**

After some deliberation regarding the location, (offers to purchase adjacent land from the First Parish Church having been declined) the Fred C. Gray Building, (housing the gymnasium and the dining hall) designed by architect Arlan Dirlam, was completed in 1949 and occupied what would become the eastern edge of the Quadrangle. Mr. Gray was the headmaster from 1925-1958. The building replaced a barn behind the Second Empire style Sheedy House which was torn down in 1955 after 32 years as a dorm. Located south and east of the 1871 School Building by several hundred feet, it was at the time of construction somewhat removed from the core of the campus, then still focused on Main Street (although Bigelow Hall was inexplicably sited in

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1863 with its back the original schoolhouse and faced Powderhouse Road). Fire, however, struck the school once again in 1956 and resulted in the total loss of the 1871 building on Main Street, but also provided the chance to relocate the campus core. The current School House, also designed by Arlan Dirlam and dedicated November 16, 1957, was sited opposite (west of) the Gray Building, thereby flanking two sides of the current quadrangle. The south and north sides of the Quad were developed with the Ferguson Building (library and performing arts; replaced Pillsbury House which was moved to its current site in 1966) and Sheedy Hall dormitory in 1968 and 1963 respectively. The Ferguson Building was named for Arthur Ferguson who began teaching English at LA in 1927 and became headmaster in 1958. Sheedy Hall was named for Micheal Sheedy, Treasurer, trustee and alumnus. Spaulding Hall, erected near the Quad between Sheedy Hall and the Gray Building in 1955, was named for alumnus Huntley Newell Spaulding who served as trustee from 1907 into the 1920s.

During the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the campus was also growing outward from the Quad to include additional buildings constructed as residences and turned to use as dormitories. The Condry Cottage, renamed Shumway House in 1964, was built c. 1850 and acquired by the school prior to 1930. Loomis House at 77 Main Street, purchased in 1947, was named for Elihu G. Loomis, an 1870 alumnus and later a trustee. The house was built c. 1905 for the carpenter Henry M. Adams. The Branigan House, renamed Prescott by the school in 1964, was built c. 1846, willed to the academy in 1956 by the long time occupant and widow of Dr. Branigan. The c. 1839 Clarence Ebert House, located south of Sheedy Hall, was purchased in 1958 for a dorm that housed 17 boys renamed and renamed the Dr. Green House in 1964. Mr. Ebert was a member of the class of 1901 and of the faculty from 1923-25. The Federal style Thompson House, located at 47-49 Main Street, was willed to Academy, 1963 but had previously been rented for a dorm since 1923. The Winthrop L. Sheedy House, now the Sheedy Faculty Building, was sold to the school in 1969. Mr. Sheedy, who renovated the building in the 1930s, was an alumnus from 1909, member of the Board of trustees and treasurer from 1947 when he succeeded his father, Michael on the board. The Federal style Caleb Butler House at 85 Main Street, was purchased in 1970 and serves as faculty housing. More recent developments and acquisitions include the Grant Rink (named for Athletic Director Norman Grant) built, 1971 and dedicated January, 1972; The Madigan Student Center (named for Joseph Madigan, Business Manager) erected, 1980 according to deconstructionist design by Richard Tremaglio; The Alumni Development House at 61 Powderhouse Road was built c. 1850 and purchased in 1987. The Ansin Academic Building was constructed in 2004 on the site of the former Sheedy Hall dormitory at the south end of the Quadrangle.

Houses that formerly occupied the site of the school buildings comprising the west side of the quadrangle were the Connolly, Sheedy and Robbins Houses (from north to south). The Connolly House was a two and one-half story, side gabled form with a perpendicular ell at the rear. The Robbins and Sheedy Houses were highly ornate Second Empire style designs with corner towers. All were demolished by the 1960s to make way for the Ferguson Building in 1968. The Thayer House, later renamed Pillsbury, had been located north of the Connolly House and south of Lawrence House and was moved in 1966 as depicted in a photo on p. 343 of Doug Frank's school history.

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**Conclusion**

The original core of the Lawrence Academy campus, now occupied by the Federal Period Brazer and Dana Houses as well as the vacant parcel formerly occupied by the two initial school buildings, maintains a prominent site on Main Street near the 1755 First Parish Church. The current core evolved along the more residential Powderhouse Road, a side street off Main Street, into a well organized campus with its central Quadrangle framed by brick institutional buildings and surrounded by scattered ancillary buildings. The town at large and Main Street in particular was well developed prior to the construction of the academy in 1793. The creation of a college preparatory school provided an avenue for many local boys to achieve a higher education and hence higher career goals. The number of native Grotonians who became working professionals, politicians, industrialists and other major contributors to society appears to be beyond the realm of normalcy for a town of its size and is due on some part to the existence of Lawrence Academy.

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**Form No.****BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES:**

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Community  
Property Address

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Rd, Lowell Rd

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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

Criteria:                    A        B        ☒ 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 Lawrence Academy at Groton, occupying parcels on Main Street, Powderhouse Road and Lowell Road, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its association with historic trends in Federal Period private education. It is among the oldest private schools in the country, having been founded in 1793. The school is eligible under criterion C for its numerous distinctive Federal, Victorian and Colonial Revival style buildings that were either purpose built for education or adapted from residential use to dormitories. The central Quadrangle represents the typical New England prep school campus layout. The views from the campus of Gibbet Hill and of Groton Center remain intact. It is eligible as a district at the local level.

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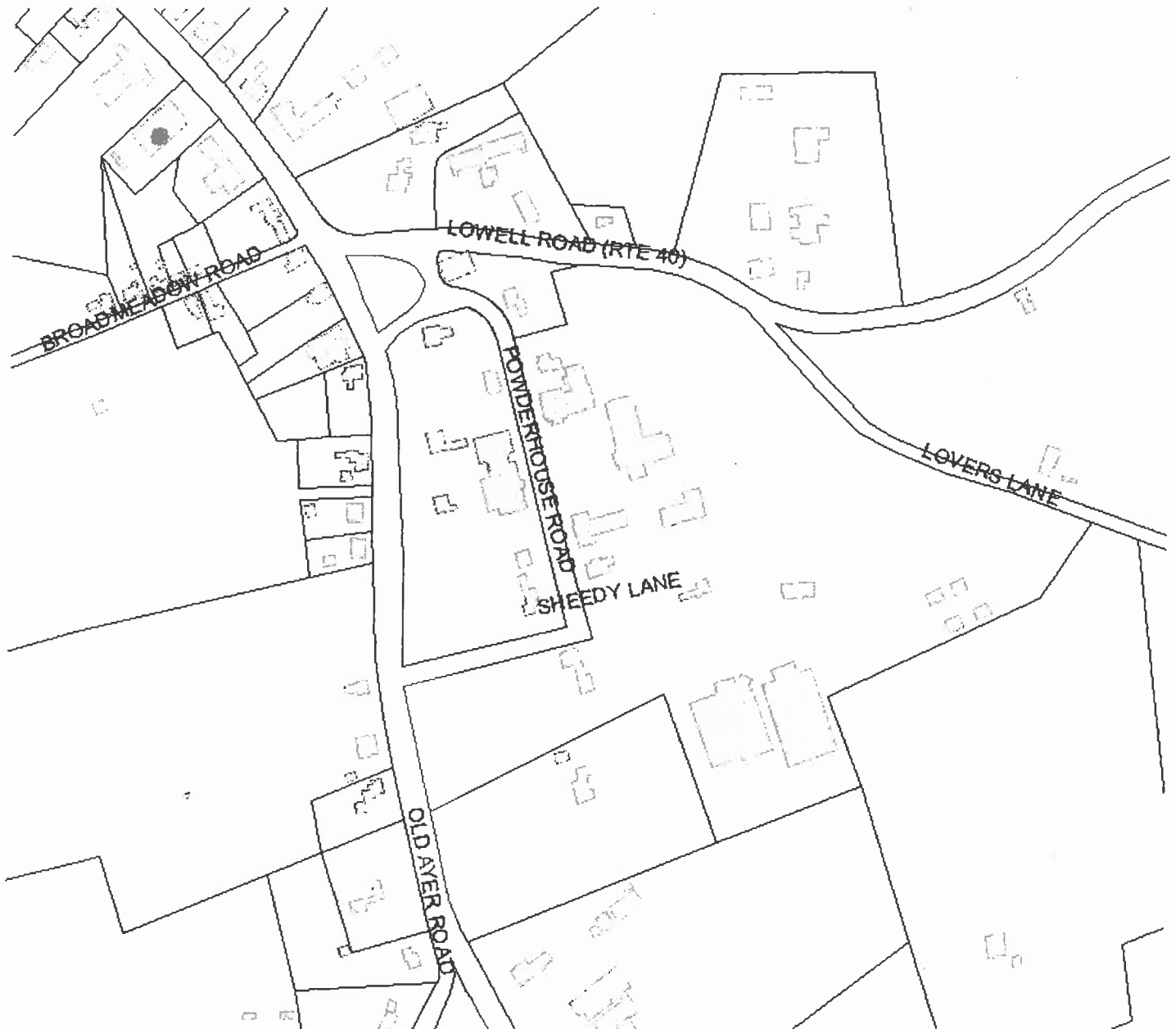
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## Sketch Map

North Toward Top



# Lawrence Academy at Groton Area Data Sheet

Map-Lot	MHC#	Street#	Address	Outbldgs/ Structures	Historic Name	Date	Style/Form	Uses: Present	Architect/Builder
113 11	12, 214	11	Lowell Road	Detached barn, 19th c.	Waters House	c. 1782	Second Empire/Federal	Dormitory	
116-9	542	90	Lowell Road		Carpenter Shop	c. 1950	No style	Shop	
116 9	543	92	Lowell Road		Peabody House/Mountain House	c. 1910	Colonial Revival	Residential	
115 1	19	36	Main Street	Detached garage	Park, John G. House	1829	Federal, Classical Revival	Residential	P. Nutting, Bldr; L. Park, architect, 1906
114 17	18, 215	47	Main Street		Park, Stuart J. House	1812	Federal, Colonial Revival	Residential	Peter Nutting, builder (?)
114 17	344	53	Main Street		Shumway House	c. 1850	Gothic Revival	Residential	
113 14	145	77	Main Street	Detached Carriage Shed	Loomis House	c. 1905	Queen Anne	Dormitory	
116 12	177	80	Main Street		Spaulding-Prescott House	c. 1846	Greek Revival	Dormitory	
113 15	17	85	Main Street	detached 20th c. garage	Butler, Caleb House	1810	Federal	Residential	Joseph Sawtell, housewright
116 12	24	86	Main Street		Brazer, James House	1802	Federal	Residential	
116 12	23	98	Main Street	Stone post and wood rail fence; granite steps	Dana, Judge Samuel House	1793	Federal	Residential/Institutional	
116 10	560		Powderhouse Road		Ansin Building	2004	Colonial Revival	Academic Building	
116 10	561		Powderhouse Road		Grant Rink	1971	No style	Hockey Rink	
116 10	562		Powderhouse Road		Faculty Housing	c. 1995	No style		
116 10	563		Powderhouse Road		Madigan Student Center	1981	Deconstructionist	Student Center	
116 10	564		Powderhouse Road		Faculty Housing	c. 1995	No style	Residential	
116 10	565		Powderhouse		Faculty Housing	c.	No style	Residential	

# Lawrence Academy at Groton Area Data Sheet

Map-Lot	MHC#	Street#	Address	Outbldgs/ Structures	Historic Name	Date	Style/Form	Uses: Present	Architect/Builder
			Road			1995			
116 10	566		Powderhouse Road		Faculty Housing	c. 1995	No style	Residential	
116 10	567		Powderhouse Road		Stone Athletic Center	c. 1998	No style	Gymnasium	
116 10	568	11	Powderhouse Road		F. G. Lawrence House	c. 1908	Colonial Revival	Dormitory	
116 12	178	12	Powderhouse Road		Bigelow, John Prescott Hall	1863	Second Empire	Dormitory	Thomas Silloway, Arch.
116 10	569	17	Powderhouse Road		Ferguson Building	1968	Colonial Revival	Library, Performing Arts	
116 10	570	25	Powderhouse Road		Gray Building	1948	Colonial Revival	Dining Hall	
116 12	571	26	Powderhouse Road		School House	1956	Colonial Revival	School Building	
116 10	572	35	Powderhouse Road		Spaulding Hall	1954	Colonial Revival	Dormitory	
116-10	149	39	Powderhouse Road		Dr. Green Dormitory-Wells-Ebert House	c. 1836	Greek Revival	Dormitory	Captain Peter Nutting
116 10	573	45	Powderhouse Road		Pillsbury House	c. 1850	Victorian Eclectic	Dormitory	
116 12	574	48	Powderhouse Road	Detached garage	Winthrop L. Sheedy Faculty Building	c. 1855	French Eclectic	Faculty Housing	Elliot Cabot, architect
116-10	460	61	Powderhouse Road	Attached barn	H. A. Bancroft House	c. 1850	Italianate	L. A. Alumni Development	

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### Photos



98 Main Street, Dana House



86 Main Street, Brazer House



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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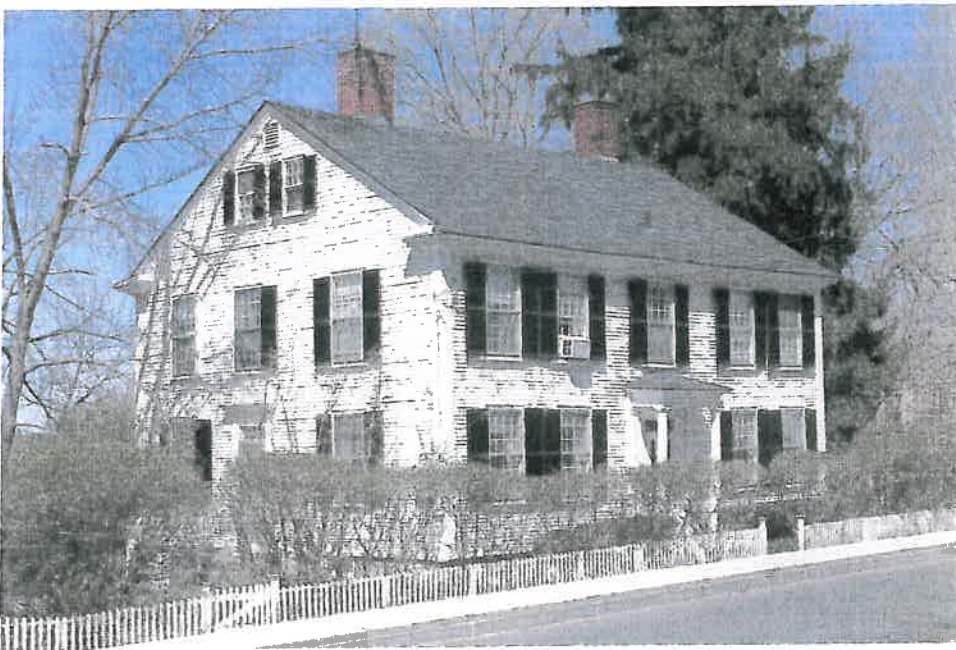
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## Photos



**36 Main Street, Park House**



**85 Main Street, Butler House**

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11 Lowell Road, Waters House



12 Powderhouse Road, Bigelow Hall



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## Photos



77 Main Street, Loomis House



Powderhouse Road, Lawrence House



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**Form No.****Photos****45 Powderhouse Road, Pillsbury House****48 Powderhouse Road, Sheedy Faculty Building**

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**Area(s)** Groton Center  
**Form No.****Photos****26 Powderhouse Road, School Building****17 Powderhouse Road, Ferguson Building**

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## Photos



**25 Powderhouse Road, Gray Building**