

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number
225 26, 27bar 191, 192, 193

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)

Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2x5" black and white only) Label photo on back with town and property address. Record film roll and negative numbers here on form. Staple photo to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

Roll Negative(s)

Address 61 Longley Road
Historic Name Jonathan Fitch House
Uses: Present Residential/agricultural
Original Residential/agricultural

Date of Construction c. 1835

Source 1832 Butler map

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood clapboard

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure

Detached barns, 19th c.

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition Excellent

Moved no ☒ yes ☐ Date

Acreage 2.4, 4.8

Setting Rural

Sketch Map

North Toward Top



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

- * The main block of the Federal style house is a 5x2-bay, side-gabled form of 2 1/2 stories; a 2-story side-gabled addition has been made to the north side wall and is covered along the full width of the first story by a hip roofed porch; a second addition, possibly of more recent construction, has been made to the rear of the south side elevation
- * Decorative features include the symmetrical fenestration in the façade of the main block, corner boards and gable returns
- * The center entry has a pedimented surround of classical design with fanlight and sidelights, pilasters and a key in the arch of the fan
- * Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with beaded trim
- * 2 detached barns exist; the larger is south of the house and is clad in wood clapboards; a Gothic arched window occupies the peak of the north-facing principal elevation which is accessed by a rolling vehicle door and a pedestrian door. Ornament includes the gable returns and corner boards; a shed roofed addition exists at the east side; a second barn is southwest of the house and is less refined in its appearance; the 1-story, gable-roofed form is clad in board and battens; rolling vehicle doors give access to the east elevation and windows are simple 6-pane barn sash;
- * The house and main barn are in excellent condition and are set amid open fields occupied by horses

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☐ see continuation sheets

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners /occupants played within the community.

The first known owner of the house was John Fitch according to the 1832 and 1847 Butler Maps. Mr. Butler's filed notes describe a house of one story with four windows across the front, probably a Cape Cod form that is noted as "old", suggesting the existing 2-story house was built shortly afterward. The soapstone quarry on the east side of Chicopee Row (MHC #901) was discovered in 1828 by Mr. Fitch who began the extraction of the material on a small scale. A brief article in the May 22, 1828 (Dedham) Village Register newspaper states that a soapstone quarry had recently been discovered in Groton and that the material was said to be of excellent quality. The 1850 Non-population Census Schedules describe Mr. Fitch as a soapstone worker with a water and steam powered mill that employed 2 men making hearths, funnel stones and other articles". After Mr. Fitch sold the quarry property in 1855 to Mr. Adams, fire destroyed the buildings in 1859. In 1860, subsequent quarry owners David and William McCaine rebuilt the buildings, experienced their loss a second time in 1864 and sold the quarry to the Groton Soapstone Company which would increase the scale of the operations, manufacturing sinks, pumps, stoves, paperweights and dishes until the quarry was well-known in the region. By 1856, the owner of the house was Benjamin F. Nutting who, according to census information from 1855 was a joiner born c. 1820 and who later maps depict as the owner in 1875 and 1889. Non-population Census Schedules from 1860 reveal he had 110 acres, a horse, 6 cows and significant crops in store. The 1930 map of Groton depicts James E. Henry, an orchardist, as the occupant. The 1939 WPA map depicts orchards, pasture and timber on the property.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

May, "Plantation", p. 15; Tercentenary Booklet, p. 60; 1832, 1847 Butler maps and field notes; 1875 Beers Atlas; 1856 Walling map of Middlesex County; Previous GHS research; 1929 resident directory; 1939 WPA map; 1889 Walker atlas; 1855, 1865 state census; Village Register newspaper, (Dedham), May 22, 1828; 1930 map of Groton; 1929 resident directory; Non-population Census Schedules;

**** All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- ☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement Form.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
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Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

61 Longley Road



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

Community Groton
Property Address
61 Longley Road

Area(s)

Form No.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible ☒ X

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district

Potential historic district

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 Federal Style Fitch House at 61 Longley Road is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The first known owner of the house was John Fitch according to the 1832 and 1847 Butler Maps. Mr. Butler's field notes from 1828-29 describe a house of one story with four windows across the front, probably a Cape Cod form that is noted as "old", suggesting the existing 2-story house was built shortly afterward. The soapstone quarry on the east side of Common Street (MH #901) was discovered in 1828 by Mr. Fitch who began the extraction of the material on a small scale. By 1856, the owner of the house was Benjamin F. Nutting who, according to census information from 1855 was a joiner born c. 1820 and who later maps depict as the owner in 1875 and 1889. The building's associations with historic early industrial activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the house's symmetrical façade, surviving historic barns and large open parcel still in agricultural use make the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.