

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

- * 55 Lowell Road is a 5x1 bay, side-gabled, 2 1/2-story, Federal style house oriented diagonally to the road; a perpendicular 2-story gabled addition of 3 bays has been made to the rear of the house and forms the L-shaped plan; an open porch covers the first story of the main block on the south and west sides; the rear e; may be of Colonial origin
- * Architectural ornament consists mainly of the symmetrical fenestration in the façade
- * Windows in the main block are 6/6 double-hung sash with beaded trim; those in the first story are extended in length; a pair of 3-sided bay windows of 1 story occupies openings near the junction of the rear ell and main block
- * The center entry has plain trim and sidelights; an additional door gives access to the rear addition
- * The two barns are gabled forms and have been extensively rebuilt to accommodate the recently constructed restaurant within; sheathing is modern wood clapboards; the shed is open on the south side and was formerly used to store machinery
- * The house and barns retain a great deal of original character despite the alterations; this is due to the quality of the reconstruction of the barns and to the agricultural setting on the slopes of Gibbet Hill; the parcel has been divided into three sub-parcels and total around 100 acres where cows continue to graze; the setting is one of Groton's most prominent and the land is under a conservation restriction
- * The stone structure at the rear of the lot near the hilltop has crenelations in the stout octagonal tower; the concrete and cobblestone foundation and tower are the remnants of a burned building that was intended to imitate a medieval castle

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 house at 55 Lowell Road has at its core a Colonial Period building constructed by John Lawrence, an original Groton proprietor, or by a descendant. Mr. Lawrence came from England via Watertown, MA. The date 1750 is said by previous GHC researchers to be carved on two boards in the attic. By 1832, the owner was Joseph F. Hall (born c. 1775, also owner fo the Groton Inn) and the house was described by Caleb Butler as having 2 stories, 2 chimneys and 5 windows across the façade, a configuration that continues to exist in the main block. By 1850, Mr. Hall owned 210 acres, 2 horses and 6 cows with property valued at \$8000, significantly more than average. Joseph Hall Jr. was the owner by 1856. He was born in Groton in 1815, married Sarah Longley in 1837 and owned 150 acres, 2 horses and 6 cows. By 1870, his property had increased in value to \$12000, suggesting the purchase of additional property. He remained here until at least 1883 according to F. M. Boutwell. GHC researchers indicate the farm was owned by members of the Gilson family for over 100 years however it is unclear which time period this was, given the name Hall is associated with the house on historic maps through most of the 19th century. The 1888 resident directory lists Mosely Gilson as a farmer on Lowell Road which may refer to this property. The 1918 and 1929 resident directories list Bertha and Howard Gilson, a farmer and rural mail carrier, as the occupants. By 1939, the farm was planted in hay, orchards and crops. The stone tower at the crest of Gibbet Hill was built in 1906 by William Bancroft as a summer house, a use to which it was never put. It did serve as a sanitarium run by Dr. Harold Ayres of 113 Main Street (MHC # 14) from 1918 until the building burned in 1932, leaving the stone foundation and tower in the mid 1900s. A long term 20th century owner of the farm was Marion Campbell, a magazine editor and Groton native who occupied the farm seasonally from c. 1950 until c. 2000. She also owned property at Surrenden Farms (including the houses at 194 Shirley Road , MHC #42, and 102 Joy Lane, formerly belonging to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Danielson)Mrs. Campbell bought the farm with a herd of black angus

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

1856 Walling map of Middlesex County; 1875 Beers atlas; 1889 Walker atlas; 1832 and 1847 Butler maps; Butler's 1829 field notes; Federal census agricultural schedules, 1850-1880; Previous GHC Research; 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance map; Resident Directories, 1888, 1918, 1929; Dr. Green. Chapter V. p. 6; XVIII, p. 5, 6; Vol. ii, p. 79, 391; Vol. ii, p. 290, vol iv, p. 230; Tercentenary booklet, 1955, p. 89; F. M. Boutwell, "Old Homesteads of Groton, MA"; 1855, 1865 state census; May, "Houses" pp. 192-194; Jones, M. E. "Gibbet Hill: Groton Landmark Steeped in History", Commerce Journal, N.D.

** 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

Town
Groton

Property Address

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

Area(s)
Form No.



55 Lowell Road



55 Lowell Road

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Groton

Property Address

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

Area(s)
Form No.



55 Lowell Road



55 Lowell Road, rear of parcel

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community
Property Address

Groton
55 Lowell Road

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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 and Colonial Style Deacon Hall House at 55 Lowell Road is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level. The house has at its core a Colonial Period building constructed by John Lawrence, an original Groton proprietor, or by a descendant. The date 1750 is said by previous GHC researchers to be carved on two boards in the attic. By 1832, the owner was Joseph F. Hall and the house was described by Caleb Butler as having 2 stories, 2 chimneys and 5 windows across the façade, a configuration that continues to exist in the main block. By 1850, Mr. Hall owned 210 acres, 2 horses and 6 cows with property valued at \$8000, significantly more than average. Joseph Hall Jr. was the owner by 1856 and he remained here until at least 1883 according to F. M. Boutwell. GHC researchers indicate the farm was owned by members of the Gilson family for over 100. The 1918 and 1929 resident directories list Bertha and Howard Gilson, a farmer and rural mail carrier, as the occupants. By 1939, the farm was planted in hay, orchards and crops. The building's associations with historic agricultural activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the house's core symmetrical façade and its setting amid farm fields with barns (recently adapted for use as restaurants) make the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.