

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # 115 2 USGS Quad Y Area(s) Form Number 20

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)
Groton Center

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 14 Main Street
Historic Name Prescott, Susan House
Uses: Present Country Day School
Original Residential

Date of Construction c. 1820
Source Samuel Green, Vol. 2 p.396

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Vinyl clapboards

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure

School buildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Re-sided in vinyl, late 20th c.; some windows replaced; porch added, c. 1900; land around developed into a school campus

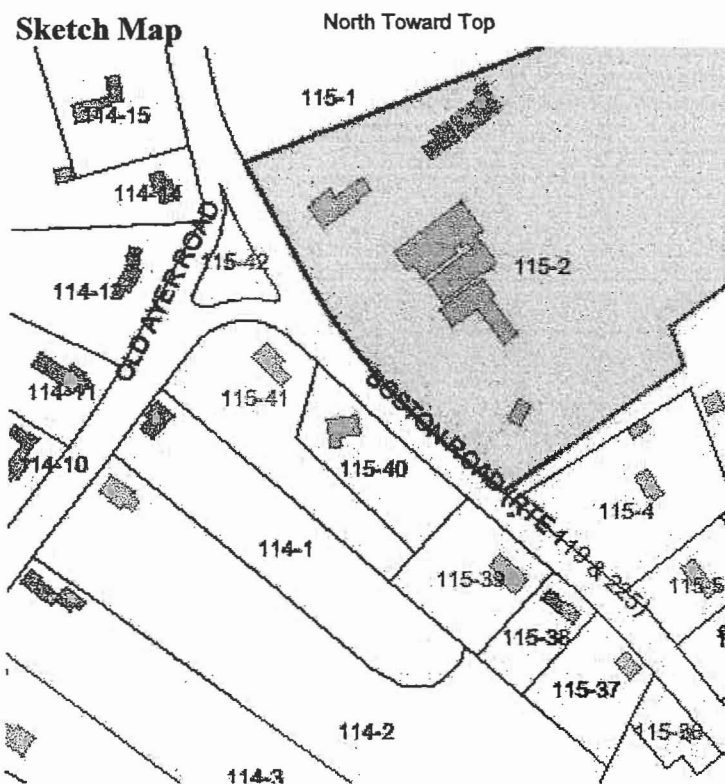
Condition Good

Moved no ☒ yes ☐ Date

Acreage 16.6

Setting Rural - Town Center

Sketch Map



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 Susan Prescott House is a ridge-hipped, 5x4-bay, 2 1/2-story building with evidence of Federal style design elements, although the exterior has been re-sided, details removed and other changes carried out
- * The first story of the façade is covered by a c. 1900 open flat-roofed porch supported by modern fluted posts
- * Fenestration in the façade retains its original symmetry
- * The center entry retains its classical surround with pilasters and sidelights
- * Gabled dormers light the attic
- * Windows re 6/6 double-hung sash that appear to be modern replacements in some cases
- * A second story entry in the center bay gives access to the roof of the porch
- * The form residence and school is now in use as a country day school and has been drastically altered; the grounds of the school are occupied by several institutional scaled modern buildings
- * The site is a prominent one at the south end of Main Street at the edge of Groton Center

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 parcel was formerly the site of the house of Dr. Oliver Prescott, Revolutionary War veteran and prominent local physician. His house burned c. 1815. Dr. Prescott's grand niece, Miss Susan Prescott, a former Groton Academy teacher, built the current house c. 1820. Shortly afterward, she had a second building built for use as a school for as many as 100 girls which she operated until 1829 when she married John Wright and moved to Lowell. The transcendentalist writer Margaret Fuller Ossoli was a student here from c. 1823-1825 and was instructed in orthogrpaphy, poetry, geogrpaphy, projection of maps, history, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, geometry, astronomy, chemistry, boatany, French, needlework, drawing, music and dancing, morals and manners according to an 1824 news ad for the school reprinted in Green. The subsequent owner may have been Reverend Charles Robinson according to Caleb Butler's field notes from 1829-30. The house Mr. Butler describes at the current location is a two story building painted white with a single chimney, a form that matches the current building at 14 Main Street. Dr. Amos Farnsworth moved here in 1832 after his retirement from practicing medicine in Boston. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, an alumnus of the Harvard Medical School and friend of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Dr. Farnsworth's daughter, Mary E. Hall of Brookline, wrote in 1897 "I can only tell you that my father Dr. Amos Farnsworth kept at his house in Groton, Mass. During the winter probably of 1836-7, a negro slave whom he sent on to Canada in the spring-I knew not whence he came or where he went. My father, doubtless from motives of prudence, never talked about the methods or doings of the Underground RR and left no mention of it among his papers." Dr. Farnsworth was the president of the Anti-Slavery Convention in Worcester in 1840 which was organized by William Lloyd Garrison and its activities reported in his "Liberator" newspaper. By 1847, the owner was A. E. Hildreth who is listed in the 1855 census as a merchant. By 1875, the owner was J. B. Sanderson. The 1889 atlas depicts Parker Fletcher as the owner of the property and tax records confirm that he owned the former Sanderson house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

1955 Tercentenary Booklet, p. 25; 1875 Beers Atlas; Previous Survey Form; Caleb Butler's Field Notes from 1829-30; Dr. Green, Vol. II, p.396; Vol. III, p.14, 25-6, 196-7, 405; Research on the UGRR by Kathryn Grover; Tax records, 1830-1889; 1855, 1865 state census; Liberator Newspaper, October 16, 1840; Sawyer, "People and Places", pp. 29-31, 40-41;

**** 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
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Massachusetts Archives Building
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s) **Form No.**

Historical Narrative **14 Main Street**

The 1888 resident directory lists him as a farmer and Dr. Green notes that in 1893, the house was in use as an inn, probably by Mr. Fletcher and that he sold ice door to door from Cadys Pond on Boston Road. Mr. Fletcher also owned the house at 127 Whitman Road (See MHC #160) and the former garrison house on Lovers Lane (now demolished, MHC #159) In 1901, Mrs. Edward Gilchrist-Lowe founded the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture here and 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. In 1928, Mrs. Lowe hired the architects Little & Russell of Boston to design a dormitory for the school which is now part of the current Country Day School campus. The house and outbuildings were shortly turned to use as a convent, novitiate and Holy Union and Sacred Heart Country Day School. At its start, the school taught 15 children in grades k-3 and by 1955, there were eight grades and 180 children. The c. 1820 building formerly used as Miss Prescott's school was moved away to its current site at 51 Hollis Street (MHC #31) according to the Tercentenary Booklet, although the residence remains.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

14 Main Street

Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Groton
Property Address
14 Main Street

Area(s)
Y

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 ☒ X

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 Federal Style Prescott House at 14 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. Miss Susan Prescott, a former Groton Academy teacher, built the current house in 1826. Shortly afterward, she had a second building built for use as a school which she operated until 1829 for as many as 100 girls when she married John Wright and moved to Lowell. The transcendentalist writer Margaret Fuller Ossoli was a student here from c. 1823-1825. The subsequent owner may have been Reverend Charles Robinson according to Caleb Butler's field notes from 1829-30. Dr. Amos Farnsworth moved here in 1832 after his retirement from practicing medicine in Boston. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, an alumnus of the Harvard Medical School and friend of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Dr. Farnsworth's daughter, Mary E. Hall of Brookline, wrote in 1897 "I can only tell you that my father Dr. Amos Farnsworth kept at his house in Groton, Mass. During the winter probably of 1836-7, a negro slave whom he sent on to Canada in the spring-I knew not whence he came or where he went. My father, doubtless from motives of prudence, never talked about the methods or doings of the Underground RR and left no mention of it among his papers." Dr. Farnsworth was the president of the Anti-Slavery Convention in Worcester in 1840 which was organized by William Lloyd Garrison and reported in his "Liberator" newspaper. The building's associations with historic educational and anti-slavery activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The building has been altered with structural additions and synthetic siding; the rear of the parcel is occupied by modern school buildings.