

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number
113 44 Y 7

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 153 Main Street

Historic Name Willard Garrison -Loring House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction c. 1660

Source Estimate by Abbott L. Cummings

Style/Form Colonial

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Split granite

Wall/Trim Wood clapboard

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure

Modern garage

Major Alterations (with dates)

Roof rebuilt, c. 1770; windows replaced, c. 19th c.

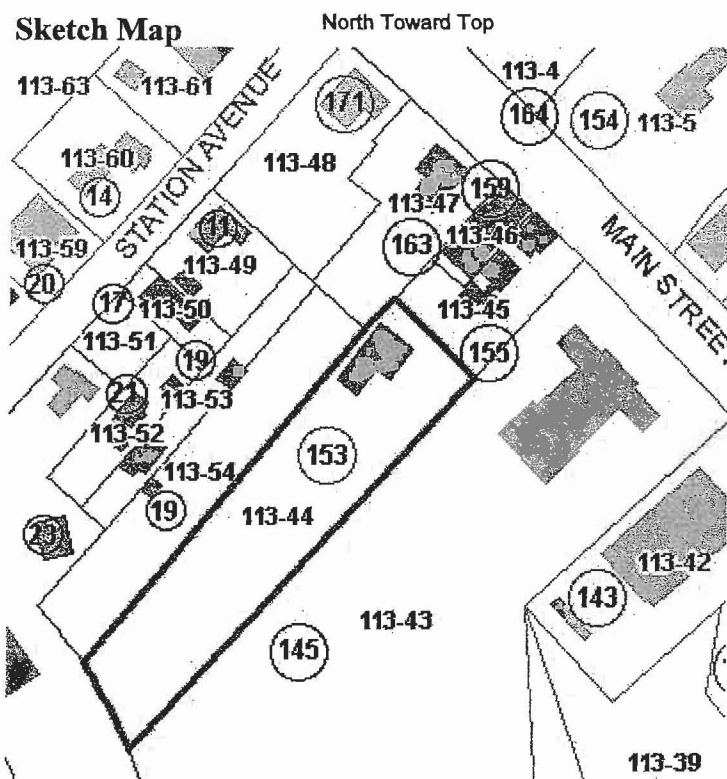
Condition Good

Moved no ☒ yes ☐ Date

Acreage 1

Setting Town center, rear of 159 Main Street

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 former garrison house is a 5x2-bay, 2 1/2-story, side-gabled form with a south-facing façade
- * The large center brick chimney and 7"x12" exposed beams on the interior suggest the Colonial Period construction date
- * Windows are 12/12 double hung sash
- * The center entry is flanked by sidelights
- * The first story of the façade is covered by a full-width hipped porch
- * A modern addition has been made to the west side of the main block and contains an attached garage
- * The house is well-maintained and is one of the oldest buildings in Groton

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 153 Main Street may have been built c. 1660 based on a report by the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities historian Abbott Lowell Cummings and by a local builder who encountered stone infilling in the walls, a building technique that gradually disappeared during the Colonial Period. Mr. Cummings and GHS researchers in the 1960s suggest this was the garrison house of Groton's second minister, Reverend Samuel Willard. The house may have served as the first church and town meeting place until construction in 1666 of the initial meetinghouse at or near School and Hollis Streets. Mr. Cummings is reported to have said that the size and markings of the beams predate the 18th century, that the roof framing is typical of the 1770s and that window framing evidence pointed to locations of the openings high in the walls, suggesting the use as a garrison. 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 voices, ventriloquism" and hurling accusations of torment toward Reverend Willard. He went on to preach at the Old South Church in Boston where he baptized Benjamin Franklin in 1706. The owner by 1832 was George D. Brigham whose name appears connected with the house on the 1832 Butler map as well as on maps and atlases from 1847, 1856, 1875 and 1889, the long period of ownership suggesting the latter sources refer to a son or relative of the earlier owner. Butler's field notes from 1828-29 describe the house as a two-story form with a single chimney and five windows across the façade painted white, basically its current form. The 1855 census lists George Brigham as a 42-year-old merchant and an older family member, also named George, as a harness maker. Non-population Census Schedules from 1850 indicate he employed one man. By 1865, George Jr. is listed as a trader and in both censuses, the location suggests their residence as 153 Main Street. Tax records from 1875 and 1889 list two houses, a barn and paint shop among his real property. The 1888

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

Condit, "American Building Art, 19th Century", p. 12; 1832 and 1847 Butler maps and field notes; 1856 Walling map; 1875 Beers atlas; 1889 Walker atlas; 1918 and 1929 resident directories; Previous research by the GHS and by Abbott Lowell Cummings; Nevin, "Stories of Salem Witchcraft"; Boutwell, "Highways", pp. 3-4; Cotton Mather, "A Further Account of the Tryals of the New England Witches"; Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1896-1906;

**** 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.

153 Main Street

Historical Narrative

resident directory places Mr. Brigham on Main Street but fails to give an occupation although he is noted for his service as town clerk. Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1906 show the house with the porch, an ell connecting an attached barn, now demolished or moved off and two diminutive outbuildings.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

153 Main Street



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Groton
Property Address
153 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

The Colonial Style house at 153 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The house may have been built c. 1660 based on a report by the Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities historian Abbott Lowell Cummings and by a local builder and former owner who encountered stone infilling in the walls, a building technique that gradually disappeared during the Colonial Period. Mr. Cummings and GHC researchers in the 1960s suggest this was the garrison house of Groton's second minister, Reverend Samuel Willard. The house may have served as the town's first meeting place until construction in 1666 of the initial meetinghouse at School and Hollis Streets. Mr. Cummings is reported to have said that the size and markings of the beams predate the 18th century, that the roof framing is typical of the 1770s and that window framing evidence pointed to locations of the openings high in the walls, suggesting the use as a garrison. Also, while it may not have occurred at this site, Reverend Willard was accosted by the accused witch Elizabeth Knap in 1671. The building's associations with historic religious and military activity establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the house, its early construction date and the surviving historic interior materials make the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship.