

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

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)
Groton Center

(3"x3" or 3-1/2"x5" 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.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Address | 179 Main Street |
| Historic Name | Bancroft, Dr. Amos House |
| Uses: Present | Residence |
| Original | Residence |
| Date of Construction | 1839 |
| Source | SAG, Vol. 2, p. 412 |

Exterior Material:
Foundation Granite
Wall/Trim Wood clapboards
Roof Asphalt shingle
Outbuildings/secondary structure
19th c. Barn

Setting Town Center

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.

- * 179 Main Street is 4x5-bay, front-gabled, Greek Revival style residence of larger scale than most others in the town center; it is distinguished by the classical portico supported by colossal fluted Doric columns in antis; The south elevation is expanded by a gabled porch enclosed with glazed side walls, sidelights and transom; a pavilion with wall gable rises above the porch; the long building extends rearward from the porch, suggesting a later addition
- * Decorative features include the prominent front portico with its closed gable, molded cornice and entablature above the four columns and the symmetrical fenestration in the 4-bay façade
- * Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash with the exception of the triple-hung 6/6/6 units in the first story of the façade and the 6/6 double-hung unit with sidelights in the tympanum; the principal entry is through the glassed in porch on the south elevation; a secondary entry has a Victorian hood with carved brackets to the rear of the porch
- * The detached barn is a large, 2-story, front-gabled form with a rolling vehicle door below a mow door in the east facing façade; fenestration in the principal elevation includes fixed 12-pane sash in the rolling door, at the south side of the door, and a tripartite example in the gable peak; additional details include the molded cornice and corner boards; the building is sheathed in wood clapboards
- * The house at 179 Main Street is unique in Groton due to the colossal columns in the façade; its location is adjacent to the town hall and close to Main Street; the lot is larger than most others in the town center and the building has been placed under a preservation restriction

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 site of the Dr. Amos Bancroft House was in the late 17th and early 18th century the site of James Parker's garrison house and in the 1740s-1750s, the site of the shop of trader Jonathan Clark Lewis, whose house was located on a knoll that was dug away prior to construction of the existing house. F. M. Boutwell recounts that, among Groton's early settlers, James Parker was the richest man in town. Dr. Bancroft may have been responsible for splitting in two the 18th century dwelling on this site and moving it to a location on Court Street to make way for the 1839 house. Dr. Bancroft returned to Groton in 1811 after attending medical school at Harvard (class of 1794) and living for a time in the town of Weston where he served as selectman, member of the school board, town moderator and greeter of President John Adams during his visit to that town in 1798. Dr. Bancroft is depicted as living across Main Street from this location on the 1832 Butler map, prior to construction of the house. In 1847, Amos was taxed for ownership of a mansion house (an unusual designation but appropriate here) valued at \$7,500, more than the average house in town, plus three other houses and \$2,000 in stocks. The map from that year shows Dr. Amos B. Bancroft at this location and Dr. Amos Bancroft (Amos B. Bancroft's father) at a house across Main Street which may have since been removed or demolished. Dr. Bancroft died as a result of an accident with a wagon on State Street in Boston in 1848. By 1856, the owner appears to have been Amory Warren who is listed in the 1855 census as manufacturer of unspecified nature, born c. 1799. On the 1875 map, the estate of W. Shattuck is depicted and tax records from that year indicate the estate of Walter Shattuck included the house on three acres, nearly the same acreage as the house currently occupies. Virginia May names Mr. Shattuck as the owner in the 1840s of a store opposite the Congregational Church at 218 Main Street (MHC #195) and Green supports this with the additional assertion that George Henry Brown ran a printing office above Mr. Shattuck's store in 1842. The 1889 Walker atlas shows Asa Stillman Lawrence as the owner who was taxed in 1889 for ownership of this and two additional houses, one of

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

Previous research; Emma Ripley, "Weston: A Puritan Town", pp. 26, 269; 1832 and 1847 Butler maps; 1856 Walling map; 1875 Beers atlas; 1889 Walker atlas; Resident Directories, 1888, 1918, 1929; F. M. Boutwell, "People and Their Homes in Groton, Massachusetts in Olden Times"; Green, Vol. 2, p. 182, Vol. 3, p. 18; Sawyer, "More People and Places", p. 52; May, "Groton Houses", p. 117; Orra Stone, "Massachusetts Industries", p. 692-3; "Historic Preservation in Groton", Boston University Preservation Studies Program, 1988; Butler, pp. 82-84, 141, 280-281;

**** 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

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Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s) **Form No.**

179 Main Street Historical Narrative

which was 187 Main Street (MHC #2), just to the north and formerly owned by William F. Gragg. Asa Stallman Lawrence sold the house to his son William A. Lawrence who appears to have lived on Farmers Row in 1888 but by 1918 he lived at 179 Main Street. He sold to the house to his son Carl Asa Porter Lawrence who rented it out from some time prior to 1929 according to the resident directory until at least 1968. During WWII, the house was named the Groton Goodwill House for a short time and served as housing for German Jewish refugees in 1940 and as a tea and coffee shop and arts and crafts center run by the New England Committee for Exiled Refugees which was headed by Dr. H. N. Goehring. Guests included a judge and a very wealthy German coffee roaster. Reverend Endicott Peabody of the Groton School spoke at the opening ceremonies in May of 1940 although the Goodwill House closed in a short time due to gas rationing. Carl Lawrence lived on Powder House Road and worked as the Vice President and Director of the Groton Leatherboard Company in West Groton (MHC #s182-188), trustee of the North Middlesex Savings Bank in Ayer, Treasurer and General Manager of the Groton Water Co. and trustee of the GPL. The house has been subject to a historic preservation restriction since 5/7/1981.

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Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

179 Main Street



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building
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Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Groton
Property Address
179 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: **X** A B **X** C D

Criteria considerations: A B C D E F G

The Greek Revival Style house at 179 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The site of the Dr. Amos Bancroft Jr. House was in the late 17th and early 18th century the site of James Parker's garrison house and in the 1740s-1750s, the site of the shop of trader Jonathan Clark Lewis, whose house was located on a knoll that was dug away prior to construction of the existing house. Dr. Amos Bancroft Jr. returned to Groton in 1811 after attending medical school at Harvard (class of 1794) and living for a time in the town of Weston where he served as selectman, member of the school board, town moderator and greeter of President John Adams during his visit to that town in 1798. In 1847, Dr. Bancroft was taxed for ownership of a mansion house (an unusual designation but appropriate here) valued at \$7,500, more than the average house in town, plus three other houses and \$2,000 in stocks. The building's associations with historic medical activity establish its significance under Criterion A. The refined design of the house with its locally unique colossal portico and the surviving historic exterior materials make the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship.