

PRELIMINARY REPORT

February 26, 1975

PROPOSED

CHELMSFORD CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Submitted by:
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I. INTRODUCTION

For a number of years The Town of Chelmsford has been one of the fastest growing communities in the Commonwealth and in the Nation. In the past ten years 1960 through 1970, Chelmsford's population more than doubled, from 15,130 to 31,432. Accompanying this tremendous growth in population has been a great increase in single home construction and a resultant increase in commercial building construction. There has been significant commercial growth in several important areas in town including; the Center, lower Chelmsford St., Drum Hill, and in Vinal Square in North Chelmsford. Unfortunately there have been few cases of what could be called eye-pleasing commercial construction. Most seems to be a hodge-podge with a complete lack of aesthetic beauty. This apparent lack of tastefulness on the part of the commercial developers, is greatly endangering the historical characteristics of several areas important to Chelmsford history, particularly the Center area.

Sensing a growing awareness of the public to this danger to Chelmsford's historical heritage, the Chelmsford Board of Selectmen established an Historic District Study Committee under Chapter 40C General Laws as amended. Historic Districts have three purposes:

1. To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns.
2. To improve and maintain the settings of those buildings and places.
3. To encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

Historic Districts are created by cities and towns themselves to protect areas which are significant in their own development.

Historic Districts can provide Chelmsford with a pocket reminder of its past and of the distinctive characteristics for which it is known. It can halt the destruction and disintegration of historical and architectural legacies of our past, with the insurance that these may be enjoyed by future generation. To the public, an Historic District offers a visual example of our historical and cultural heritage. To its residents, besides a continued opportunity to enjoy this beautiful town, it offers economic protection from decrease of land values.

The Chelmsford Historic District Study Committee sees the establishment of an Historic District as a way to promote proper design of buildings and land development so as to benefit the entire community. This step will not prevent buildings of new structures, or modification of present structures, nor will it regulate the use of any property. However, it will, if adopted, assure that changes, when made, will be characteristic of the area and will blend with the other houses in the district.

II. APPROACH USED

The Historic District Study Committee began from the fortunate position of being able to rely on a great deal of information on historical buildings in Chelmsford that has been accumulated by the Chelmsford Historical Commission. Over the past few years the Commission has inventoried many of the older buildings in the community and is currently actively engaged in preparing inventories of buildings in North Chelmsford and South. These inventories include age of construction, association with events and families of historical importance to the development of the town, unique architectural features, records of property transfers and pictures of major sites.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been working with the town in determining possible sites for listing in the "National Register of Historic Places." In order to be listed in the "National Register" an Historic District must be recommended by the State Historical Commission. "Historic District National Register" listing is not the same as a local Historic District. However, the work done in conjunction with the National Register listing is a good indicator of major areas of historic interest and was used by the Study Committee.

In addition, work is being done to identify historic areas in Chelmsford by the Bi-Centennial Commission. Other sources of preparing a base of information are listed in the bibliography of this report. A large U.S.G.S. Map has been prepared which shows almost all buildings in Chelmsford constructed before 1831. This map provides an excellent overview of contiguous areas of older buildings that could be logically grouped into a district.

There are several areas in Chelmsford which have historic significance. Some of them are:

- : The Chelmsford Center and Common Area
- : Areas of Turnpike Road and Golden Cove Road
- : South Chelmsford Common Area
- : Mills located in North Chelmsford

Upon reviewing the areas of potential Historic Districts, the Study Committee decided that continued development pressure on the Chelmsford Center and Common area posed a threat to the maintenance of the architectural and historical integrity of the area. Prudence dictated that an initial historic district should be proposed at the earliest practical time which would take immediate action to insure that continued development of the Center would take place with consideration of its historical and architectural values.

The Study Committee embarked on a concentrated effort following that decision which involved inventorying all buildings constructed prior to 1830 and other buildings of historic interest not contained in the information gathered by the Chelmsford Historic Commission and on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Included was a request to the residents of these buildings to view the interior structures. The results are summarized in the body of this report. District boundaries were defined to include buildings and historic sites of significance and includes a minimum surrounding protective area to insure the maintenance of an aesthetically sound district.

III. JUSTIFICATION OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

III. A1. HISTORICAL NOTE ON CHELMSFORD

Chelmsford, one of the Massachusetts Bay Colonies, was settled about 1653 by people from Concord and Woburn. In 1655 the Rev. John Fiske of the church in Wenham was secured by the Town, and came to Chelmsford bringing some of his church members with him. The Town was granted its charter by the General Court in May 1655, together with Billerica and Groton. As a frontier town it had its share of Indian fighting, and then, as it has ever since, it provided soldiers for the country's battles.

From its early days, until after World War II, Chelmsford has essentially been a farming community. A number of small businesses, however, have waxed and waned over the first 200 years of our history, including such useful ones as iron smelting, lumbering and wood products, and the manufacture of lime, bricks and glass. Chelmsford granite, which came into prominence after the Revolution and was used in Boston and other cities, is still being quarried. Large woolen mills were operated in North Chelmsford from the 1880's until about 25 years ago. Within the past 20 years a variety of small industrial enterprises have become operative in the industrial zones of the Town.

In area Chelmsford was originally twice its present size. In 1729 the Western section, almost half the area of the original plantation, left to become the Town of Westford. Thirty years after its charter Chelmsford purchased from the Indians their land between the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, known as "the Neck," to increase its amount of arable land. "The Neck" eventually became the major part of downtown Lowell, being separated in 1826 to form the Town of Lowell, which ten years later became the City of Lowell.

This development, which started within the bounds of Chelmsford, is recognized as being the first industrial community which was planned as such from the outset. Also remarkable was the Middlesex Canal, running 27 miles from Middlesex Village (now in Lowell) to Boston. It opened in 1803 and continued until competition from the new railroads forced its discontinuance in 1852. The canal was the first of its type in the nature of a public utility, and is considered to be the greatest single work of engineering improvement up to that time.

The farms of Chelmsford have largely disappeared over the last 30 years, and been supplanted by extensive residential developments. A few years ago Chelmsford was one of the fastest growing communities in the entire northeast. In view of this rapid growth some residents have come to feel that it is appropriate, indeed urgent, that some steps be taken to preserve at least a small portion of our older Town as a tangible physical link with our historic heritage, before change completely eradicates it.

III. A2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DISTRICT

The proposed Center Historical District of Chelmsford embraces many of the historical sites of the Town, and covers an area which has been a principal center of Town activities from the earliest days. It is pleasantly situated on gently rolling upland. In character of use the proposed district varies, as it includes commercial, civic, ecclesiastical, and residential aspects. The greater number of structures were built during the last century, although there are several eighteenth-century buildings, and some that were erected during the present century.

As we approach Central Square, proceeding west on Billerica Road, a pleasant residential street, on the right the charming fieldstone Anglican-style church of All Saints Parish set atop a knoll, commands our attention. At the corner on our right is one of the oldest buildings in the proposed District, formerly a residence and the All Saints Parsonage, but now remodeled into offices. Beyond this on Chelmsford Street are two early 19th century houses used by several of Chelmsford's Doctors for a hundred years.

On the south corner of the junction of Billerica Road with the Square sits the large white Fiske House. This fine Federal-style building with brick ends and fan-lighted doors was for a time the Lafayette House Tavern. It is enclosed by a graceful white fence, and sits on the high point of the Square with main entrances looking out on both the Square and Billerica Road, with its garden terraces to the south leading down to Beaver Brook.

At the tip of the triangular green, at the low point of the Square, on the bank of Beaver Brook, is the large, wooden Oddfellows Building. Its hall, now converted to apartments, once was rented for the first motion picture theater in Chelmsford. A bank and a store occupy the first floor, which has been used for businesses from the first.

The green, or small common, in front of the Fiske House, has a stone monument commemorating this spot as the assembly point for the Chelmsford Minutemen on April 19, 1775. To the west of the green is the large, wooden Wilson Hotel, or Central Block, with its street-level shops, and its upper stories now made into apartments. At the north-east corner of the green is the old Parkhurst Store Building, for many years a general store and post-office, and now a bookstore.

Looking northwest from the green, we see the stately white edifice of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House on a low hill overlooking the Square. This 1842 Meeting House in the Greek Revival style is the fourth Meeting House on the site, the earliest one dating back to about 1659. The tall spire surmounted by a shooting-star weathervane, houses the 1877 Town Clock. The lower part of this building was built by the town, for the Town Meetings were held there until 1879.

If we proceed north across the railroad tracks, opposite the Meeting House, at the intersection of North Road and Westford Street there is a small green on which stands the large Town flagpole, often referred to by older generations as the "Liberty Pole." On our right is the 1879 Town Hall, housing the offices of the Town. Town Meetings were held here until a few years ago, when attendance increased so much because of the growth in the Town, that they had to be held in one of the larger school auditoriums

From the flagpole, looking northwest the well-landscaped Town Common slopes up and away from us. A low, curved ornamental stone wall backed by shrubs and shade trees sets off the entrance to the Green. From there the spacious lawn ascends to the high point of the Common where the Revolutionary Soldiers Monument stands on the spot where in early days the Town stocks were located. A drawing of the Monument, and its motto: "Let the Children Guard What the Sires Have Won," constitutes the main part of the Chelmsford Town Seal. To the east of the monument there is a huge beech tree, planted on an Arbor Day about 75 years ago by school children. Farther to the east near the lowest point of the Common there is a small granite marker commemorating the first school in the country for the deaf which used oral teaching methods. The school was held in the Winn-Emerson house just across Academy Street. South from this marker, across from the Center Fire Station, is a memorial monument for the World War II soldiers of Chelmsford.

If we stand in the center of the Common and turn west, we see the expanse of the Forefathers Burying Ground, surrounded by its old stone wall, rising up the hill behind the Meeting House. This is the oldest cemetery in Town, and is fittingly named, for here are interred the early ministers and settlers of the Town, and many of its prominent citizens for over 250 years. Here also lie many soldiers of the Revolution and the Civil War.

At the northeast corner of the Burying Ground facing Westford Street stands the red brick 1802 school house. After the building was no longer used for a school it provided housing for the Town hearse, which was kept there many years. The building is now partially being restored to its original state. Immediately behind the brick school stands the Middlesex Canal Toll House, which originally stood near the entrance of the Canal in Middlesex Village.

Across from the northwest point of the Common, at the junction of Academy and Westford Streets, is the large, wooden-frame 1868 Central Baptist Church, built on the site of the Col. Stoddard House. The adjacent Parsonage on Academy Street is located on the site of the Chelmsford Classical School, where Ralph Waldo Emerson taught in 1825, and which later housed the Chelmsford Academy, which operated for a time before the Civil War.

To the West of the Baptist Church, Bridge Street, named for the fourth minister of the Town, winds its way over the Burying Ground Hill. This old street, once known as the "Lane" was originally a cartpath through the land of John Fiske, the first Minister.

Proceeding along Westford Street north from Bridge Street we find on our left three residential houses on high ground above street level. The largest of these was built by the Rev. Hezekiah Packard, fifth minister of the Town. This large Georgian-style house topped by a balustrade, is well-separated from its neighbors. It has deteriorated somewhat, although some restoration has been attempted in recent years.

The Packard House looks down on the junction of Westford Street and Worthen Street. Westford Street, known in the earliest days as Stoney Brook Path, curves up the hill to the left. Worthen Street, part also of one of the very first roads of the settlement, proceeds to the northeast. Although the stately elms which once shaded the commons and streets of the Center are gone, there are many shade trees left, so that these two streets are typical of the quiet residential village of 40 years ago.

On the left of Worthen Street on a spacious corner lot well-screened by trees there is a large, white Georgian building suggesting the houses in Salem or Portsmouth. This house, formerly known as the Capt. Sam Davis House, has more recently been called the Russell House. Across from it is the modern brick and wood Congregational Church flanked by two nineteenth-century frame houses.

Further down the short street, on the north side are two fine nineteenth-century houses, the first only a few years younger than the Russell House, the second about 85 years younger. Next there is the modern Blake Funeral Home, and at the extreme end of Worthen Street a new wood-frame building in Colonial style.

The small triangular park at the joining of Worthen Street with North Road, formerly called North Square, but now Fletcher Square is noteworthy for being enclosed by a stone post and square-rail fence like that which formerly surrounded the Town Common.

Crosby Lane, which proceeds to the east from Fletcher Square, is a continuation of the ancient road which later became Worthen Street. A short distance down the Lane we find the Crosby Place, or Capt. Josiah Fletcher House, a well preserved late Georgian-style farmhouse. A few yards east of this place once stood another Fletcher house, one of the earliest built in Town. In that house in 1654 was held the first Town Meeting. A stone marker recalling this event has been placed on the lawn of the Crosby Place. Three other fairly modern houses are located on Crosby Lane, which ends at the Crosby Place.

Just south of Fletcher Square, between Worthen and North Road, there is a good-sized frame house which has been remodeled into apartments. South of this is a telephone equipment building, and a two-story professional office building. These two modern brick buildings are unobtrusive and do not conflict with the older-style existing buildings.

Across from these buildings is St. Mary's Catholic Church. This large, new church (1961), at the corner of North Road and Fletcher Street, is set well back from the edge of both streets. Just north of the Church is another large, nineteenth-century Fletcher house, which now serves as an educational building for St. Mary's.

Across Fletcher Street from St. Mary's is a one-story bank building. This brick building, although only a year old, has been designed so as to be compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood. Across North Road from the bank there is a large, white two-story residence about 70 years old, which sits well back above the street. Just to the south of this place, on the corner of Academy Street, is yet another Fletcher House, often known as the Otis Adams House, or the Winn-Emerson House, after former residents.

On the other side of North Road from the Adams House is another a few years younger, the Emerson Farm. This is an 140-year old farm house, with the outbuildings and barn typical of a farm of 100 years ago. It is the only remaining farm in the Center of Chelmsford.

Completing our circuit of the District, south of the Emerson Farm are three buildings on North Road, facing the Common. The first is the 1952 brick Central Fire Station, built on the site of the old Center School. Next is an early twentieth-century frame house, now the office of the Chelmsford Newsweekly. Finally there is the Richardson cottage, typical of small village cottages of 150 years ago. It is interesting for having been built as twin apartments, completely separated except for sharing a common roof and the well.

III. B. JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT

The Boundaries of the Center Historic District were selected mainly on the basis of Boundaries of Historically or Architecturally significant property, However in some cases the Boundaries were extended to include Buildings which, although not Historic or Architecturally significant, lend themselves nicely to the District and provide protection to significant Property in the way of a buffer.

Beginning at the Unitarian Church Lot 135A on the corner of Littleton and North Roads, the District Boundary runs along Littleton Road until it reaches the West Boundary of Forefathers Burying Grounds Lot 135. Littleton Road, offers a Natural Boundary for these two Historically important Properties. The Committee would like to have included a buffer on the other side of Littleton Road, However the area is already developed commercially and it is felt that there is not much hope of stopping the trend in that area. The District Boundary then runs Northerly along the West Boundary of Forefathers Burying Ground, crosses Bridge Street and continues along the Property Line of Lot 100. This Boundary was selected for ease in describing the Boundaries and also to protect the Aesthetic Appeal of the area. This House built in 1908 blends nicely with the House next door on Lot 99 and both offer a nice contrast with The Historic Rev. Packard House on Lot 98, 16 Westford Street. The District Boundary then follows the Westerly and Northerly Boundaries of The Rev. Hezekiah Packards House, until reaching Lot 96, where it continues in a straight line along the Northerly Line of Lot 96 and crosses Westford Street. Houses on Lots 96 and 97 were built in the 1880's and offer a nice contrast with both the Packard House and the Davis-Russell House across the street on Lot 17-A, Worthen Street. The Davis-Russell House Property is next included. Built in 1790, this House is a fine example of Federal Architecture. The District Boundary runs along the line between Lots 17-A and 17-A/2 and continues in a straight line across to Lot 19. Hence Northwesterly along the Westerly Boundaries of Lots 19, 20B and 20/2. The Boundary then runs Easterly along Route 495. It was the desire of the Commission to preserve the Houses on Lots 18, built in 1803 circa and 19, built in the 1880's. The recently built Garrison Colonial on 26 Worthen is also an attractive addition to the District. Lot 20/2 was included for protection to the North-erly end of Worthen Street and to facilitate identification of the Boundary, Route 495 being a Natural Boundary. Continuing along 495 the District next encom-pases the Property belonging to the Capt. Josiah Fletcher Home on 14 Crosby Lane. This Property is included because of its Historical significance to the Town. Be-sides the House the Property also includes an Historical marker locating the site of the Town's First Meeting House. The District Boundary then moves and continues Southerly across Crosby Lane to include Lot 61 and continues in a straight line across Lot 71 to Fletcher Street. Lot 61 was included to preserve the Aesthetic Beauty of Crosby Lane, and because the House fits in well with the area. Because of both its Historical and Architectural significance the Committee felt that Lot 70, 33 North Road must be included. The surrounding properties were included for ease in drawing Boundaries, because they blended nicely with the area and offered some protection for the District. The Boundary then follows the South Boundary of Lots 61 and 70-A, until it arrives at the Boundary of Lots 70 and 70-A. From thence it moves Southerly cutting across Lot 71 to include the Roman Catholic Church. This building was built to fit in well with the Houses in the area and gives protection to the District. The Historic District Boundary continues in a straight line across Fletcher Street and continues to Lot 73. This Lot contains 11 North Road.

This House, built in the early 1800's is an example of Post-Colonial Architecture. It is the one remaining working farm in Chelmsford Center. The Boundary follows the Easterly Line of Lot 73, then cuts across the Penn Central Railroad to take the House on Lot 82-A. This property was included to provide protection to 20 Chelmsford Street. This Federal style House was built circa 1831, by Dr. Paul Kittridge, one of a famous family of Doctors. This House is in nice condition and is an attractive addition to the District. Across the street from The Kittridge House, the District encompasses the Dr. Francis Kittridge House, son of Dr. Paul Kittridge. Built circa 1845, this house is a good example of a combined Greek and Gothic Revival style with a two story Pedimented Portico. The committee felt that the Old All Saints Church Rectory on 6 Billerica Road, Lot 49-A must be included. Built between 1760 and 1770, this attractive Georgian Structure is Historically important to the Town of Chelmsford. The All Saints Episcopal Church was included as protection for the setting of the District. Crossing Billerica Road the District takes in the Fiske House on 13 Billerica Road. Built in 1798 this house is one of the better examples of FederalStyle Architecture in the town. The House at 3 Billerica Road blends nicely with the area and was included as protection to the setting of the District. Beaver Brook was chosen as the Southerly Boundary of the Historic District, because it was a Natural Boundary. The old Oddfellows Hall, on Lot 20, was next included because it was felt it added protection to the preservation of the so called Fiske House, Lot 19, and the present owner had made it an attractive addition to the District. Halfway across Boston Road the Historic District includes a small Public Green with a Memorial from the D.A.R. marking the site where the Chelmsford Minutemen assembled before leaving for the Battle of Concord in 1775. This site is an Historical as well as an attractive addition to the District. Finally the District cuts across Boston Road to include Lot 1 and the old Hotel. Built in 1884 this Hotel represents a typical Victorian Hotel of the Era, and in addition it provides some protection to the setting of the District.

III. C. DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS

This section contains summary descriptions of the buildings in the proposed Historic District which have been inventoried for the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

(Copies of the Inventory Sheets are attached for reference in Appendix C, which are included only with designated copies of the complete report.)

First Congregational Society (Unitarian) Meeting House

As the first, and for many years the only, Church in Chelmsford, this parish has a long history inextricably connected with that of the Town. The present building is the fourth to stand on the site and was built in 1842. The above-ground brick basement was built by the Town and was used as a Town Hall until 1879. It was also used for public meetings and social gatherings. In 1876 the steeple blew down, and was struck by lightning about 1910 and again in 1955. The steeple clock was purchased by subscription in 1877 and is the property of the Town. It is hand-wound once a week.

1802 Schoolhouse

This brick building was constructed in 1802 to replace the existing schoolhouse on this site which had been built in 1718 by public subscription. Among many famous educators who taught here was Willard Parker who later became a founder of the Academy of Medicine and eventually its president. In later years the building has been used for storage by various Town departments. In 1974 a decision was made to restore the schoolhouse to its original condition.

Middlesex Canal Tollhouse

This small office building, probably built in 1832, stood in the Middlesex Village section of Chelmsford (now Lowell) at the Merrimack River end of the Middlesex Canal. In 1955 it was located in front of the Chelmsford Town Hall and used as an information booth for the Chelmsford Tercentenary Celebration. It was moved to its present location in 1959.

The Middlesex Canal extended 27 miles from Lowell to Boston and was the first traction canal in America.

4 Westford Street

Although several construction features suggest that this house was built about 1800, deeds indicate that perhaps it was built about 1845. At one time the property was owned by Patrick Haley, a postmaster in Chelmsford Center.

16 Westford Street

This house was built in 1794 by Rev. Hezekiah Packard who had served in the Army during much of the Revolutionary War. While minister in Chelmsford (1793-1803) he founded the first social library in town. Samuel Pitts, who purchased the house in 1797, also served in the Revolution and was one of those who threw British tea into Boston Harbor. Rev. Wilkes Allen successor to Rev. Packard, was living in the house when his "History of Chelmsford" was written and printed (1820.)

A volume of 192 pages, it was the first town history in bound format to be printed in this country.

10 Worthen Street

This house was built about 1799 by Samuel Prince, a nephew of Samuel Pitts who lived across the street from him. After passing through several owners, it was purchased in 1822 by Samuel Davis who was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and a prominent citizen of Chelmsford. Upon his death the property was sold to another prominent citizen, David Perham, who gave to the town the small triangle of land at the junction of Westford and Worthen Streets known as Perham Park. The road in front of the house is one of the oldest in town and is named after the owners of the house in the late 1800's.

14 Worthen Street

This house was probably built about 1810 by Azariah Proctor, a wheelwright. In 1838 it was inherited by his son, an innkeeper, who for a time kept the tavern which stood on the site of the Chelmsford Bookstore at Chelmsford Street and Billerica Road. The property eventually passed to Dr. Samuel Dutton who was the Surgeon in Chief of the 11th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War.

14 Crosby Lane

This house was probably built about 1802 by Josiah Fletcher, 3rd who lived there until his death in 1850. He was among those who marched to Concord on April 19, 1775 and spent much of the war in the Army, eventually rising to rank of Captain. In 1859 the house was occupied by Laommi Chamberlain who constructed the Revolutionary War Monument on the Chelmsford Common. The property was sold in 1870 to Ephraim Crosby for whom the street in front of the house is named.

1 Academy Street

This house was probably built prior to 1819 by a member of the Fletcher family. Between 1849 and 1872 the house was owned by Deacon Otis Adams, a particularly well known figure in town, having been a leader in the Unitarian Church, and a prime mover in the erection of the Revolutionary Monument on the Center Common. It was the deacon who suggested putting on one side of the monument, "Let the children guard what their sires have won." A phrase which has since become the Town Motto. From his first election in 1827 to his retirement in 1860, he served almost continuously in responsible positions of local government, including selectmen. Deacon Otis Adams owned the house in 1866 when the Chelmsford School for the Deaf opened in its left-hand upper front room. This school the forerunner of the Clark School in Northampton was the first in the Country to use only the pure oral method. The Winn Family occupied the house in the late 1800's were very active in the organization of the Central Congregational Church and donated part of their land for the Church to build on. Since 1908 the property has been owned by the Emerson Family.

11 North Road

This house was probably built between 1831 and 1846 by Stephen Pierce. Subsequent owners were Hildreth Dutton and Alvah Richardson, a Civil War veteran. In 1869 the property was purchased by James P. Emerson, another veteran. His successful express business was ruined by the coming of the railroad and he turned to farming. The property is still owned by the Emerson Family and is the last active farm in Chelmsford Center.

1 - 3 North Road

This house was probably built between 1840 and 1848 by Joseph Reed who kept the tavern at the corner of Chelmsford Street and Central Square and owned the store between this house and the tavern. In 1867 Mary Elizabeth Richardson bought the house and it remained in the Richardson/Davis Family until 1973. Descendents of the family still live in one side. During most of the time since 1900 half the house has been rented. This house is unusual in Chelmsford because of its "double cottage" architecture. It is two complete houses, mirror images of each other, which share a common room at the rear center. There have been very few alterations since it was built.

Store - Central Sq. & Chelmsford St.

This building was built as a store, about 1861, by Edwin King Parkhurst, and was originally located between the present railroad tracks and the Town Hall. During the Civil War the Soldier's Aid Society met at the new store building in a room called Central Hall on the second floor over the grocery to quilt, knit, and make articles for the soldiers. In 1871 the building was moved to its present location. While the ground floor has always been a store, the upstairs has contained since 1900 at various times a shoemaker's shop, a printing shop and office space. The Chelmsford Post Office was located in the store for many years. During most of its history the store was owned by members of the Parkhurst Family.

All Saints' Rectory

This is now the oldest house in the proposed District. It was built probably before the Revolution on Billerica Road near River Meadow Brook, and moved to its present site in 1810. It is a large two-story Georgian style House having three chimneys. From 1868 until 1882 part of the downstairs was used as an Episcopal Church, which was built on an adjacent plot in 1879. Rev. Wilson Waters, rector of this Church for 41 years, and the author of "The History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts," lived here.

Although there have been many alterations over the years, the outward appearance of the building retains its original character. It has recently been renovated, and contains offices and business establishments.

20 Chelmsford Street

This house was built by Dr. Paul Kittridge who came to Chelmsford from Littleton in 1831. He had an extensive practice and was often called, especially in cases of surgery, far beyond the usual circle of his practice. Himself the son of a doctor, he had 14 children, 4 of whom also became physicians. The house was later owned by Adams Emerson, a commissioned officer in the Civil War. Subsequently it was purchased by Ervin Sweetser, for many years the Town Treasurer.

21 Chelmsford Street

Built between 1839 and 1843, this house was owned by Dr. Francis Kittridge, son of Dr. Paul Kittridge who lived across the street. In 1848 the property was sold to Dr. Levi Howard and upon his death in 1885 passed to his son Dr. Amasa Howard. Dr. Howard's widow sold the house in 1924 to yet another physician, Dr. Leonard Durststoff. The present owner, Henry Ericson, purchased the property in 1948 and operated an antique business in the barn.

The Fiske House

Built in 1798 by Col. Simeon Spaulding, Jr., a Revolutionary War officer, this house is one of the most stately in Chelmsford. It has brickends and four chimneys. Interesting details are the fanlights over the outer doorways, and the graceful white fence. The house is in fine condition, and has been changed little from when it was built.

After several changes of ownership, it was being run in 1839 as the Lafayette House Tavern, when John Minot Fiske and his wife bought it for their residence. It has since remained in the Fiske Family.

33 North Road

This house was probably built by "Captain Billy" Fletcher about 1817 for his son William, on part of the land granted to the first William Fletcher about 1655. Captain Billy, a farmer, was a member of Parker's Company on April 19, 1775, but evidently was among those who arrived after the retreat from Concord began. He never actually held the rank of Captain. For nearly 100 years, until 1912, the house was owned by his descendants. In recent years it has been rented for apartments until purchased in 1965 by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston. It is now used as a religious education building by St. Mary's Parish.

IV. OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Historic District Enabling Statute allows the Historic District Study Committee to recommend a variety of alternatives regarding the composition of a proposed Historic District Commission and the criteria to be used in assessing appropriateness of a proposed architectural modification. The options available, those chosen by the Study Committee and the reasons for those choices are identified below.

A. Composition of Historic District Commission

1. Number of Members: A Commission could have been recommended with from three to seven members. The Committee has designated a five member Commission on the belief that the size of the district would not require an excessive workload of such a number of members and a larger commission would be cumbersome given the limited scope of The Commissions responsibilities.
2. Alternate Members: Provision can be made for alternate Commission members. The Study Committee chose to exercise this option by providing for two alternate members. Alternate members will provide stability and continuity to the Historic District Commission. Knowledge of the Commissions responsibilities will be held by a larger number of people and potential source of replacement members with demonstrated ability and interest in the Historical Commission will be provided.
3. Members of the Commission: A requirement may be stated which would allow a resident of the District to be a member of the Commission. It is also possible to require that representation on the Commission be given to other organizations, those specified in the statute.

The Study Committee chose to require that one member of the Commission be a resident or owner of property in the District and that the Chelmsford Historic Commission be allowed to submit nomination to the Commission for selection by the Selectmen. Members with an interest in property owners within the District and with a demonstrated interest in the history of the town will provide a balance to the decisions the Commission will be called upon to make.

The Committee may have chosen to require a member from the local Historic Society. The Historic Commission member was preferred because it appeared to the Committee that the Historic Society option was oriented toward communities which did not have Historic Commissions and that an Historic District Commission could benefit from the experience of an individuals serving on another Town Board.

B. Exclusions from Review

Several items can be excluded from the review of an Historic District Commission, there are:

1. Temporary signs or structures
2. Terraces, walkways, driveways and or other similar structures, provided that the structures is at grade level
3. Walls, and or fences
4. Storm doors and windows; screen doors and windows, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae and similar appurtenances or any one or more of the foregoing

5. Color of paint
6. Color of material used on roof
7. Signs used for residential occupation or professional purposes which are not more than one foot square in area provided that:
 - a. Only one such sign is displayed
 - b. The sign consists of letters painted on wood without a symbol or trademark
 - c. If illuminated, is illuminated only indirectly
8. Signs used in connection with non-residential purposes which are not more than twelve square feet in area, with the same constraints as identified in (7) above
9. Reconstruction of building, structure or architectural feature which has been damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided that:
 - a. The exterior design is substantially similar to the original
 - b. The reconstruction is begun within one year after the damage occurred and is carried out with due diligence

The Study Committee chose to recommend exclusion of (5) color of paint, (6) color of materials used on roof and (9) reconstruction of structures damaged by disaster. Although these items may be appropriate to some communities, the Committee believes that they are excessively restrictive given the nature of the proposed district and should be excluded from the control of the Historic District Commission.

Maps

1831 Map of Chelmsford
1856 Walling's County Map
1875 Beer's Atlas
1889 Atlas

Newspapers

Chelmsford Eagle
Lowell Courier-Citizen
Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955

Records

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, deeds & plans
Middlesex County Probate Court
"Vital Records of Chelmsford to 1850", Essex Institute, Salem, 1914
Chelmsford Assessors' Records, current, 1824, 1827, 1828, 1834, 1848
Book of Roads of Chelmsford

Historical

"History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts," Rev. Wilson Waters; Courier-Citizen Company, 1917
"History of Chelmsford." Rev. Wilkes Allen; P.N. Green, 1820
Diary of Rev. Ebenezer Bridge (1749 - 1792)
"Contributions of the Lowell Historical Society," Vol. 1, No. 2, "Boyhood Reminiscences of Middlesex Village" by Hon. Samuel P. Hadley; Butterfield Printing Co., 1911
"Fletcher Genealogy," by Edward H. Fletcher; Alfred Mudge & Sons, 1871.
"Fletcher Genealogy," compiled by William H. Drury
Adams Family Papers
"Parkhurst Genealogy," compiled by George Parkhurst
Notebook, Miss Frances Andrews
Pamphlet, "Open House in Six Early Homes of Chelmsford," 1955
"Beside Old Hearthstones," by Abram English Brown, 1897

Reference Books

"American Architecture Since 1780," by Marcus Whiffen; MIT Press, 1969
"Architecture in Early New England," by Abbott Lowell Cummings; Old Sturbridge Village Booklet Series, Meriden Gravure Company, 1972
"The Dating of Old Houses," by Dr. Henry C. Mercer; American Life Foundation, 1968
"Glossary of Colonial Architectural Terms," by Norman Morrison Isham; American Life Foundation, 1939.
"Historic Homes & Places and Genesiological & Personal Memoirs Relating to the Families of Middlesex County, Massachusetts," by William Richard Cutter, New York; 1908.

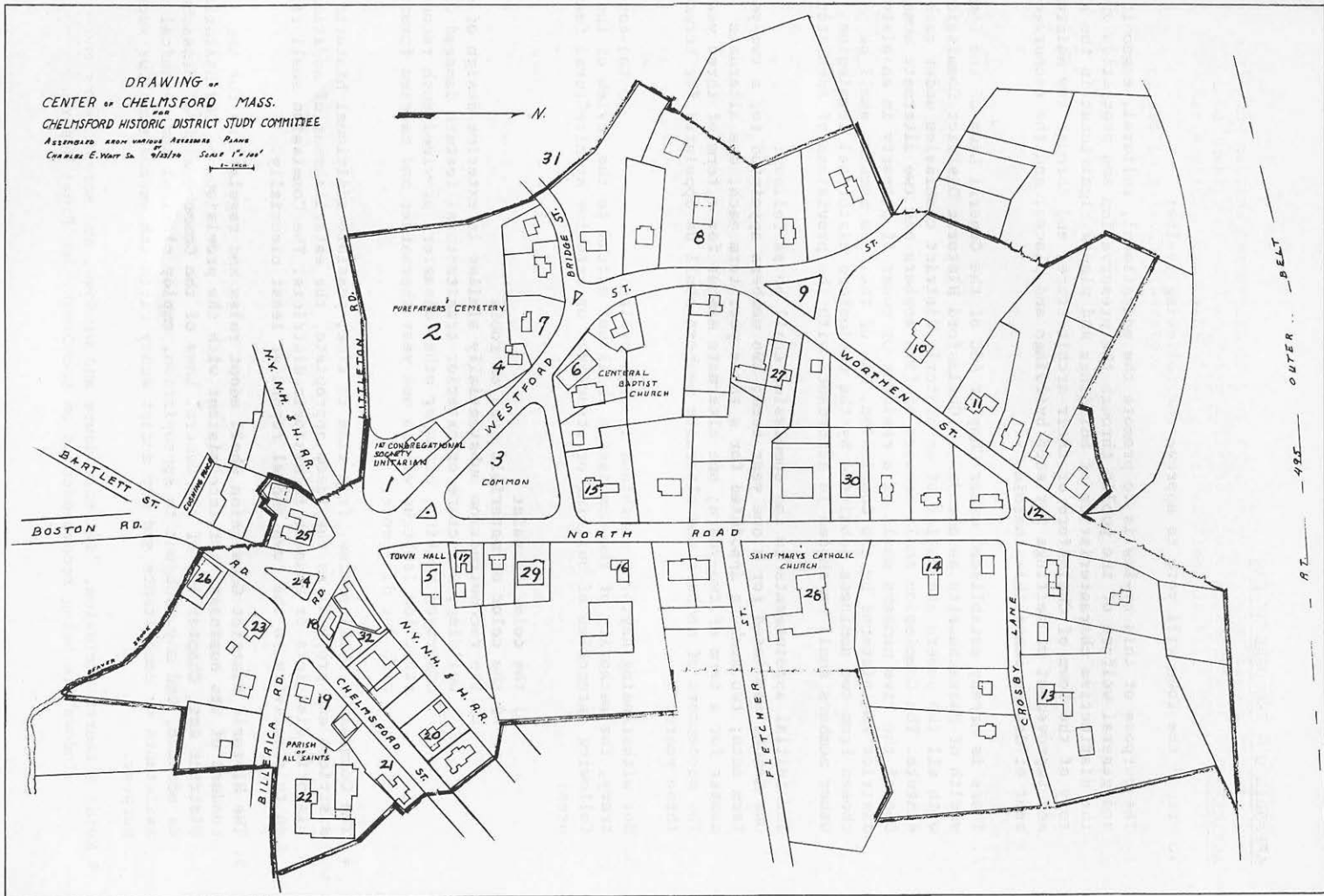
MAP OF PROPOSED CHELMSFORD CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

APPENDIX A

Location Key:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| (1) The Meeting House
1st Cong. Society (Unitarian) | (17) Richardson/Davis House |
| (2) Forefathers' Burying Ground | (18) Parkhurst's Store |
| (3) Town Common | (19) Old All Saints' Rectory |
| (4) 1802 Schoolhouse, & Middlesex
Canal Tollhouse | (20) Kittredge/Sweetser House |
| (5) Town Hall | (21) Kittredge/Howard House |
| (6) Central Baptist Church | (22) All Saints Church |
| (7) Sullivan/Haley House | (23) Fiske House |
| (8) Rev. Hezekiah Packard House | (24) Central Square small common |
| (9) Perham Park | (25) Wilson Hotel Block |
| (10) Davis/Russell House | (26) Oddfellows' Hall Building |
| (11) Dr. Samuel Dutton House | (27) Congregational Church |
| (12) Fletcher Square | (28) St. Mary's R.C. Church |
| (13) Capt. Josiah Fletcher House | (29) Center Fire Station |
| (14) William Fletcher House | (30) New England Telephone Building |
| (15) Winn/Emerson House | (31) Old Town Pound site |
| (16) J. P. Emerson House | (32) Smith/Osborne House |

DRAWING OF
 CENTER OF CHELMSFORD MASS.
 FOR
 CHELMSFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE
 ASSEMBLED FROM VARIOUS ASSESSOR PLANS
 OF
 CHARLES E. WORT SR. 9/12/1900 SCALE 1"=100'
 1"=100'



BELT
 OUTER
 RT

APPENDIX D - PROPOSED BY-LAW

ARTICLE (1)

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following by-law:

1. The purpose of this by-law is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Town of Chelmsford or their architecture, and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places, and the encouragement of design compatible therein.
2. There is hereby established under Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as amended, a Chelmsford Historic District Commission, with all the powers and duties of an historic district commission under such statute. The Commission shall consist of five members and two alternate members. One of the five members shall be a resident or owner of property in an historic district administered by the Commission. One of the five members shall be chosen from two nominees submitted by the Chelmsford Historical Commission. Other members shall be chosen in accordance with the provisions of such statute.

The initial appointments to the Commission shall be as follows:

One member appointed for a one year term; two members appointed for a two-year term each; two members appointed for a three-year term each; one alternate member for a term of two-years; one alternate member for a term of three years. The successors of members and alternate members shall be appointed for terms of three years.

3. Notwithstanding anything contained in this by-law to the contrary, the authority of the Commission shall not extend to the review of the following categories of building or structures or exterior architectural features:
 - a) the color of paint
 - b) the color of materials used on roofs
 - c) the reconstruction substantially similar in exterior design of a building, structure or exterior architectural feature damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence.

*
4. The Commission shall review, from time to time, possible additional historic districts and propose, as they deem appropriate, the establishment of additional historic districts or changes in historic districts. The Commission shall report on this activity in the town annual report at least biennially.
5. The Historic District Commission shall adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of its business, not inconsistent with the provisions of the Historic District Act, Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended, and may, subject to appropriation, employ clerical and technical assistants or consultants and may accept money gifts and expend same for such purpose.

* Note: A fourth exclusion, "d) Storm doors and windows, and screen doors and windows" is being recommended as an amendment. See Final Report.

6. If any section, paragraph or part of this by-law, be for any reason, determined invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, every other section, paragraph or part shall continue in full force and effect.",
or act in relation thereto.