

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

84/340/2

Billerica

CLM.324

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: Chelmsford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Chelmsford Center

Photograph



Address: 4 Bartlett Street

Historic Name: Rev. Thomas Clarke/Oliver Fletcher/Joel Adams Bartlett House

Uses: Present: multiple-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: possibly late 17th century?

Source: Chelmsford Historical Commission files

Style/Form: no style

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
2015 change of setting

Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .45 A

Setting: The house is located south of Chelmsford Center at the intersections of Bartlett St, Boston Rd, and Acton Rd. The Chelmsford Library is to the south and an expansion project abuts the property. The lot is flat with a parking area west of the house. The surrounding area includes 19th-21st c. commercial development.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Jennifer Burden, Gray & Pape, Inc.

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

This house is a two-and-a-half-story side-gable building that follows a rectangular plan. The roof of the house is covered with asphalt shingles and the exterior walls are clad with wood clapboard. The house rests atop a stone foundation. Two internal brick chimneys are located within the main mass of the house; one each on the rear and front slopes of the roof with the rear chimney being shorter. Stylistic details of the building are minimal, but subtle hints of Greek Revival appear in the door surrounds of the primary (west) façade and north end of the house. The primary facade faces toward Bartlett Street and Acton Road. A one-story summer kitchen addition extends from the north, gable end of the house. Excluding the summer kitchen extension, the building's primary facade is divided into four bays with the front entrance located directly in the center. On the first story, a pair of two-over-two double-hung windows is located to the north side of the door and a single two-over-two double-hung window is located to the right or south side of the door, giving the facade an asymmetrical appearance. This pattern is repeated on the second story of the façade. A fourth window is located directly above the front entrance, giving the second story of the façade a total of four windows. The rear or east side of the house follows a similar asymmetrical fenestration pattern, but there are only three windows on the second story and the doorway is absent. The north and south gable ends of the house feature smaller one-over-one double-hung windows at the first, second, and half-story levels. A pedestrian door with sidelights is located at the northeast corner of the north end of the house. The summer kitchen extension, which extends from the north end of the house, features two pedestrian doors in the west side and one in the east side of the building. Fenestration consists of a pair of two-over-two double hung windows in the west side and a pair of two-over-two double-hung windows in the east side. Window surrounds thought the house are simple in appearance. The front entrance and the entrance at the north end of the house each feature simple, Classical-inspired trim.

The building is a good example of a possible late seventeenth century residence within Chelmsford's Central Square. The building retains historic integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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.

Although previous research by the Chelmsford Historical Commission points to a building on this site in the late seventeenth century, a close examination of the interior framing and other architectural evidence by an expert would need to be made to confirm that such an early building survives here. Previous research of the property suggests it could be of the oldest standing buildings in Chelmsford. In the 1670s the Town called in Rev. John Fiske to assist Rev. Thomas Clarke, whose health was failing, with his duties. When Rev. Fiske passed away in January of 1677, the Town asked Rev. Clarke assume the pastorate. The Town promised Clarke land and a house and the record from the Town Meeting notes that a vote was taken for the Town to pay £60 toward the purchase of land and to build a house on the lot, with Rev. Clarke paying one-quarter of the costs of these efforts. An agreement between the Town and Clarke was signed on February 5, 1677. On November 27, 1679 Clarke agreed in writing that "the agreement is fully performed by the inhabitants of Chelmsford." Rev. Clarke died on December 7, 1704 and because his estate was in debt, the administrator of the estate, Edward Emerson, sold the property to pay down some of what he owed. In February 1705, Jonathan Tyng purchased the property from the estate. Tyng's son Major William Tyng was married to Rev. Clarke's daughter Lucy. Tyng retained the property until March 1713 when he sold this and other holdings in Chelmsford to Captain Moses Barron. Research suggests Barron may have previously rented this property from Tyng for his tavern. Barron died intestate on September 16, 1719 and Barron's wife Mary and son Jonathan were appointed the administrators of the estate. Mary and Jonathan remained on the property. In 1724 Jonathan was permitted to be an innkeeper; therefore, he continued his father's line of work. Jonathan died on August 20, 1748 and his assets were granted to his widow Rachel. On April 24, 1760

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Rachel, then listed as Rachel Bancroft, relinquished her rights and title to Jonathan's estate and sold the property to Isaac Patten. Three years later on March 4, 1763 Patten sold the property to Oliver Fletcher.

Oliver Fletcher (1708-1771) was likely Chelmsford's first lawyer and played a significant role in the history of the Town. Fletcher taught grammar and writing in the local school for six years. He was elected as a town selectman and town clerk in 1751 and 1752. In 1752 he also became the town moderator. Fletcher was also a Justice of the Peace for Middlesex County and the Chelmsford representative to the General Court in Boston. Fletcher's purchase of this property in 1763 may have been in anticipation of his marriage to Grace Weld in 1766. Fletcher died only five years after his marriage to Grace, and according to his will he left the property to Grace until her death, and then it was to be transferred to his only child Martha. This plan was executed as on July 16, 1823 Martha (also known as Patty), who married John H. Weld, granted the property to her daughter-in-law Dorcas Weld. Dorcas sold the property on April 1, 1839 to S.S. Parkhurst, marking the end of the 66-year Fletcher family ownership history.

The property next experienced a series of short ownership periods. Parkhurst sold the property less than one year later on January 2, 1840 to Judah Wetherbee. Five months later Wetherbee sold the property to John M. Fiske. Fiske passed on August 16, 1841 and his widow Eliza Winn Fiske sold the property on January 12, 1843 to Joel Adams. While Adams owned this house he resided at 15 Bartlett Street. It appears Adams's daughter Maria Juliette and son-in-law Dr. John Bartlett lived in this house for some time. The property eventually was granted to Maria's and John's youngest son Joel Adams Bartlett (1842-1921) and his wife Emma (1846-1936). The property remained in the Adams family until February 1946 when it was sold to Catherine Riney. The Riney family kept the property until 1995, selling it to current owner 4 Bartlett Street LLC.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Drury, Jane. Personal collection of building history materials for 4 Bartlett Street. Currently kept in private collection.

Parkhurst, Eleanor. "Oliver Fletcher was first town counsel." *Chelmsford Independent*. 10 August 1995.

Perham, Henry S. *A Sketch of the History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia, PA, J.W. Lewis. 1890.

Waters, Dr. Wilson. *The History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Lowell, Mass., 1917.

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance

This building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register at the local level. The building meets National Register Criterion A for its association with early development of Chelmsford and Criterion C as a good example of early residential architectural that retains most historic integrity.

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Rear wall, facing northwest. May 2016.



Rear and side walls, facing north. May 2016.

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Undated photograph of the front of the house from Jane Drury Collection.



Undated photograph of the rear of the house from Jane Drury Collection.