

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

74/275/26	Billerica		CLM.21
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Town/City: Chelmsford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Chelmsford

Photograph



Address: 110 Billerica Road

Historic Name: Jonathan Manning House/Town Farm

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1816

Source: *History of Chelmsford*

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Large barn to the north of the house

Small barn behind the large barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

19th c. rear addition

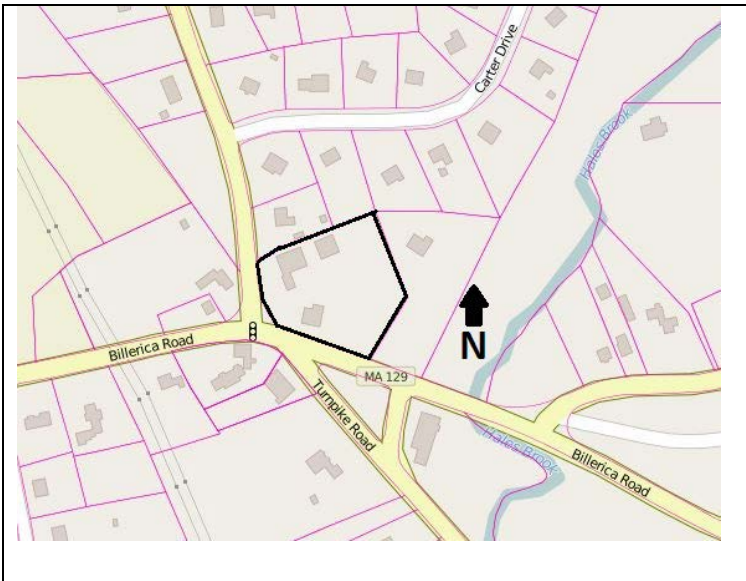
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1.62 A

Setting: The resources are at the intersection of Billerica and Turnpike rds. The house is approximately 25' north of the road. A modern retaining wall is in front. The barn and is approximately 80' north of the rear of the house. The lot is flat with mature trees. The area includes 19th & 20th c. residential and commercial developments.

Locus Map



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

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

110 BILLERICA ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CLM.21

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.

Manning House

The Manning House is a 2.5-story building with a stone foundation, walls clad in wood clapboard with wood trim, and an asphalt-shingled side gable roof. The house measures approximately 50' wide by 35' deep. Two substantial brick internal chimneys are located along the ridgeline of the roof. A rear gable dormer is located along the rear slope of the roof. The building features slight gable returns and wood cornerboards. Fenestration throughout the building consists of historic wood 12-over-12, double-hung windows. It appears the historic shutter hardware remains extant; the original inventory form for the property completed in 1976 shows shutters were located on each opening at that date. The primary (south) façade is symmetrically five bays wide. The outer four bays on both stories feature single windows spaced closely together. A single window is also in the center bay of the second story. The centrally located main entry features a solid, wood paneled door topped with a five-pane transom surrounded by wood pilasters and an entablature. The east and west walls are five bays deep with single windows in the four outer bays of the first and second stories. A single window on the half-story is centrally located below the gable peak. A secondary entrance in the center bay of the west wall mirrors the main entry on the primary façade. A two-story addition encompasses the three east bays of the rear wall. The date of the addition is not known, but likely dates to the nineteenth century. The addition has a shed roof and is clad in the same wood clapboard as the rest of the house. The addition also features a tall internal brick chimney that is of comparable height to the others on the main portion of the house.

Barns

The main barn is the north of the Manning House and faces Golden Cove Road to the west. It measures approximately 50' wide and 65' deep. The barn is clad in wood siding and has a standing seam metal roof. A one-story, three-bay shed is attached to the barn's south wall. The primary (west) façade of the barn features a centrally located carriage door topped with a 20-pane transom. A pedestrian door and a hatch have been retrofitted into the vertical plank carriage door. A slight ramp of earth and gravel leads to this door to provide easier access to move goods into and out of the barn. A loft door is located on the second story of the barn to the north of the carriage door. Another loft door below the gable peak of the façade is currently covered with plywood or other temporary covering. The north wall of the barn features several small, square hatches with wood doors on the first story. The second story includes three historic wood 12-over-12 double-hung windows. A photograph of the property in the *History of Chelmsford* shows the barn had a cupola, but the ca. 1912 photograph (see below) indicates the cupola was removed by this date.

A smaller barn is located at the rear of the main barn and is not fully visible from the street. This barn is 1.5-stories tall with a one-story shed roof wing along its rear (east) wall. The barn is clad in wood clapboard and has standing seam metal gable roof. The north wall features a large central door topped with a multi-pane transom and flanked by a set of six-over-one, wood, double-hung windows. The south wall features six windows on the first story with four in the main part of the barn and two in the shed roof wing.

The buildings are good examples of a nineteenth century residence and barns that retain historic integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, and association.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

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Area(s) Form No.

	CLM.21
--	--------

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.

According to the 1917 *History of Chelmsford*, the house was constructed in 1816 by a Jonathan Manning, but is unclear if this was Jonathan, Sr. (1749-1828, born in Chelmsford) or his son, Jonathan, Jr. (1774-1865). The building for as Manning's home and operated a tavern, being well-situated on the Middlesex Turnpike that travelled between Boston and New Hampshire. Another tavern was located across the road at 109 Billerica Road (CLM.22) that was operated by Joseph Manning, who was Jonathan, Sr.'s son and Jonathan Jr.'s brother. The tavern lasted into the 1830s as the Boston and Lowell Railroad, which opened in 1835, permitted travelers a quicker and more reliable transport along the route. By 1838 decreased traffic on the turnpike necessitated the closure of the tavern. The property continued as a house and farm until 1872. In that year, the Town was in need of a new site for the Town Farm (also known as the Almshouse, Poor Farm, or Town Infirmary). The subject of a poor house for Chelmsford first arose in March 1732 when the Town voted to "build a dwelling house for the poor;" however, this project appears to have never been fulfilled.

In 1823 the Town purchased a 120-acre farm for \$2,950 that included a house and barn from Salathiel Adams (1782-1855; born in Chelmsford, died in Vermont). The Town spent an additional \$530.72 for repairs to the property to convert it into a workhouse for the poor of the Town to be employed. To pay for the purchase and repairs to the property, the Town borrowed \$3,500 from various citizens.

The property was located on the north side of Mill Road near its intersection with Turnpike Road. In 1871 the house on the property burned and its residents were relocated for several months to a house across Mill Road then owned by Benjamin P. Hodges. Shortly thereafter, the Town purchased the Manning property for use as the new Town Farm for \$4,750. The property included 30 acres with the house and an additional 14 acres on the south side of East Chelmsford Road; this parcel was latter used as part of the Pine Ridge Cemetery, located to the east of the current property. By 1917 the Town Farm included 21 acres of farm land and typically housed 10-12 "inmates."

The "inmates" of the Town Farm were often those who were unfortunate or destitute, and oftentimes were too young or old to perform many of the chores on the farm. Farm tasks, therefore, were often completed with assistance of the farm's overseer or superintendent. Town Reports show that couples acting as managers of the farm were paid \$300 annually, which eventually increased to \$800. The Reports also tracked income and expenditures at the site. Income included the sales of produce, livestock, and machinery; lease of equipment; and funding from other places (Lowell, Boston, and Cambridge) for the care of its resident(s) at the farm. Expenditures included food and care of residents and general maintenance of the property. Residents lived on site for no set amount of time, but records indicate the shortest stay was one year and the longest was 67 years. The Town Farm also included a "tramp house" that provided overnight lodging as well as morning and evening meals in exchange for a reasonable amount of labor. In 1900, 960 "tramps" were housed overnight; records do not indicate where the lodgers were headed and if any were repeat guests that year. In 1906 the records ceased listing the number of tramps that stayed at the farm. The tramp house was demolished in the 1950s.

Although earlier efforts failed, the Town finally closed the Town Farm in 1942. At this date the three residents remaining on site were sent to the Westford Infirmary. The Town agreed to pay the Infirmary, via the Welfare Department, \$500/person annually for their care. The furnishings of the Town Farm were then sold at public auction and the Town approved the sale of the land and buildings.

In October 1942, the Town sold the farm land, then listed as 25.7 acres, to Roy and Vera Clough. The 1940 U.S. Population Census lists Roy Clough (1889-1973) living on Bartlett Street in Chelmsford with son Roy, Jr., daughter Annie, son-in-law Robert Donaldson, daughter Blanche Donaldson, and their infant son Robert, Jr. At this date Roy, Sr. was an architect with his own practice (Vera is not listed in the record). The 1949 city directory lists Roy and Vera still residing on Bartlett Street; therefore, the house on Billerica Road was not their primary residence. The previous year the Cloughs sold the property, now reduced to 20.5 acres, to Walter and Priscilla Bedell. The 1949 directory lists the Bedells at this address with Walter employed as a fireman. When the Bedells sold the property in 1959, they reduced the size of the lot that contains the buildings to 1.62 acres, its current size. That year Arthur and Marjorie Hansen took ownership of the property. They retained it until 1979, selling it to current owner Randall R. Plowman.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

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Area(s) Form No.

	CLM.21
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Chelmsford Historical Society. Photo Print Collection. Available at <http://www.chelmhist.org/CHSPPhoto/CHSPPhoto.htm>.

Drury, Jane. Massachusetts Historical Society Inventory Form, "Manning House/Town Farm." CLM.21. 1976.

Genealogical research, including U.S. and Massachusetts census records; birth, marriage, and death records; and city directory records from ancestry.com.

Middlesex North Registry of Deeds. www.lowelldeeds.com.

Parkhurst, Eleanor and Fred Merriam. *History of Chelmsford 1910-1970*. Chelmsford, 2011.

Waters, Wilson. *History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Courier-Citizen Company, Lowell, MA. 1917.



Undated photograph of Town Farm house. (Chelmsford Historical Society.)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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

The property is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Town Farm history of Chelmsford. The Town Farm was established in 1823 and moved to this location in 1872 after fire destroyed the previous property. The Town Farm remained in operation at this site for the next 70 years, closing completely in 1942. The buildings on the property are the only extant resources associated with the Town Farm. The Manning House is also eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C as a good example of an early nineteenth century residence that retains historic integrity.

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--	--------



Barn, facing east.
November 2015.



Shed wing of barn,
facing east.
November 2015.