

FORM B – BUILDING

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

94/ 368/ 20/ 1

Billerica

CLM.422

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

Town/City: Chelmsford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



View looking northeast from Boston Road.

Address: 118 Boston Rd

Historic Name: Jonathan and Hannah Putnam House

Uses: Present: Single family dwelling

Original: Single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: circa 1817

Source: Waters: *History of Chelmsford*

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder: Not known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, cut

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles, clapboard / wood trim

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None visible

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Replacement shingles and clapboard, windows, and doors (early 21st C); Replacement of façade architrave and fanlight (21st C); Chimney rebuilt (20th C).

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1.0

Setting: The house is located in a suburban residential area. Houses along Boston Road, the historic road leading to Chelmsford center from the south, range in date from the 18th through the late 20th centuries.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies, Historic Preservation Cons. for

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date: March 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

118 BOSTON RD

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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.

The house at 118 Boston Road is oriented west toward the road atop a slight rise. A large, dry-laid stone wall runs along the west side of the lot, along Boston Road. An asphalt-paved driveway leads from Boston Road past the south side of the house and ends at the rear ell. The gently-sloping lot is planted with grass with mature trees at the perimeter of the lot.

The two-story frame building is symmetrical in plan, 5 bays wide and two bays deep. The building is clad with clapboards on the main elevation, wood shingles on the side elevations, and trimmed with cornerboards and a skirt board. Two ranks of closely-spaced bays flank the façade's center entrance. The building rests on a cut stone foundation and is capped with a side-gabled roof with shallow eaves. A large interior brick chimney is centered on the roof ridge. A long, perpendicular frame ell extends from the east (rear) elevation. A two-story, gabled frame addition, approximately the width of one bay, was added to the north elevation of the main block prior to the mid-20th century.

The center entrance is accessed by two cut granite steps. Trim, although recently added, reflects the building's Federal origins. The paneled door is surrounded by slender Doric pilasters and a projecting, molded cornice. Windows are trimmed with narrow wood moldings. The secondary entrance, on the south elevation, features a similar surround. There, the architrave is augmented with an extended frieze containing a semi-circular blind arch reminiscent of a fan light.

A historic photograph of the building¹ indicates that, at one time, the northwest corner of the house contained an undercut porch. The photograph also provides evidence of the original fanlight and façade architrave.

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.

Jonathan Putnam moved from Bedford to Chelmsford and purchased this property in 1766.² The existing house at 118 Boston Road is reported to have been constructed circa 1817 to replace an earlier house on the property.³ The property passed through four generations of the Putnam family:

Jonathan Putnam (1728-1784) and his wife, Hannah, to their son;

Joseph Putnam (1771-1858) and his wife, Anna, to their son;

Israel Putnam (1805-1887) and his wife, Mary, to their children;

Israel L. Putnam (ca. 1839-1891),⁴ Sarah Putnam, and Mary P. Hall.

Israel Putnam operated a cider mill at the south end of the property beside Putnam Brook. It has been reported that this mill was converted to the house at 122 Boston Road (CLM.423).⁵

In 1924, Sarah Putnam and Mary P. Hall sold the house and 30-acre property to their cousin Guy Leslie Putnam (1881-1943) and his wife Esther.⁶ (G. Leslie Putnam's great-grandfather was Joseph Putnam.) G. Leslie Putnam farmed the property and the couple lived here with their daughters, Barbara and Dorothy, until 1944.

¹ *Images of America: Chelmsford*: 93.

² Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 4, p. 589.

³ Waters: 698 and Putnam: 216.

⁴ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 116, p. 336.

⁵ "Chelmsford...A Historical Tour."

⁶ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 698, p. 508.

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Madeline W. Shea and her husband, Vincent, owned the 30-acre property from 1944 to 1952.⁷

George and Yvonne Archer owned the property from 1952 to 1975.⁸ They had previously lived next door at 122 Boston Road. George Archer was vice-president of Ames Textile Corporation, according to city directories.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



View looking north.

⁷ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 1191, p. 68.

⁸ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 2162, p. 585.

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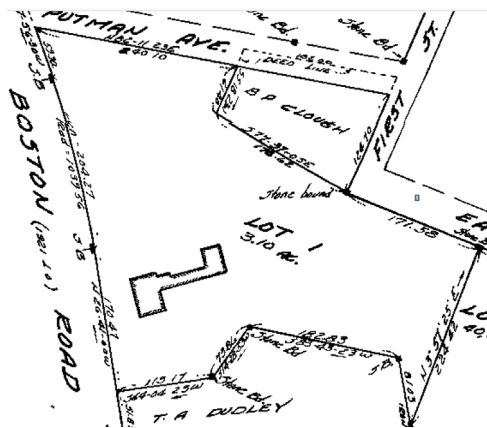
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View looking southeast.



Historic image. View looking southeast.



Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Plan Book Plan Book 120, Plan 4. 1974.