

FORM B – BUILDING

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

13-10-4	Tyngsboro		004
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town Chelmsford

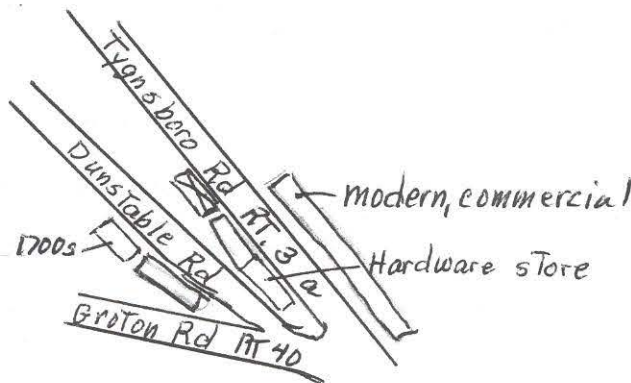
Place (neighborhood or village) North Chelmsford



15-21 Dunstable Road
Name Adams Reed Factory
Present apartments, offices
Use reed factory
Construction 1835-6
 deeds, tax records
Form gable, rectangular, 83 by 29 feet, 2½ stories in front, 3 at rear
Architect/Builder 1st owner: Thomas J. Adams
Material:

Sketch Map

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Foundation fieldstone, large granite at rear side
Wall/Trim brick, clapboards under gables
 granite lintels over windows
Roof gable
Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

Major Alterations (with dates)

1909 annex added to each side of center (original) section
 attic construction in original section indicated shallow hip roof;
 probably removed at this time.
 1980-2 new front entrances; rear entrance uncovered, had been bricked
 in. Original door bricked in 1916.
 bricks re-mortored cost: \$10,000

Condition very good

Moved no yes **Date**

Acreage 7,011 sq. ft.

Setting in commercial area; between two busy streets

Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month/year) September 2003

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

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

The Reed Shop at 15-21 Dunstable Rd. is a very plain rectangular shaped, brick building. Twenty two strips of clapboards are under the gabled ends, which are on the additions. It has two stories in front and on the ends, but due to the slope of the land there are three stories at the rear. On the sides of the main, original building, are additions made in 1909. The exterior wall of the additions are covered with "trash" bricks, as labeled by Joseph Orphant, of the MA Historical Commission in 1980. Construction in the attic of the original section indicate that it formerly had a hip roof.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

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.

This building was erected in 1835-36 for Thomas J. Adams on land owned by his father, William Adams. In 1838 the property, including the building, was deeded to Thomas J., who had been paying taxes on it since 1836. He never lived here. The occupation of Thomas J. Adams was listed as farmer and civil engineer. He studied engineering and became a surveyor. "Possessed of considerable mechanical skill, in his early years he invented surveying instruments, which he procured to be constructed in Europe for him for his own use" During the early 1800s the Adams family owned most of the land in the northern part of the North Chelmsford village and were engaged in a great variety of activities there. Thomas J., with a brother, owned a nearby tavern, and in 1852 they gave the land on which the North Chelmsford town hall was erected. He was an original subscriber to the North Chelmsford Library Fund. he and his brother's heirs donated the land in front of their house on Middlesex Street for a common.

The original use of the building at 15-21 Dunstable Rd. was as a factory making reeds for looms used by the textile industry located in Lowell. Perhaps some of the textile machinery was made in the Gay & Silver Machine Shop about a mile south of 15-21 Dunstable Road. By 1848 the Dunstable Road building had probably been converted to housing. However, Thomas J. Adams, and his father before him, resided on Middlesex Street. By 1861 the reed shop was a two family home, a situation which remained as long as it remained under Adams family ownership.

In 1980 Joseph Orphant, then of the MA Historical Commission, would have recommended it for the National Register had it been known that "Reed Factory" meant just that and not that a Mr. Reed had owned it. Further deed research confirmed that it was indeed a factory that made reeds. However, since then the owner has replaced the old doorways on the front of the building with modern "reproductions."

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Bk. Plan Bk. 34, plan 72
Chelmsford tax records; Building Inspector's records
Sunday Telegram, Dec. 19, 1908, June 27, 1909; Sunday Sun, Jan. 17, 1892
1831, 1859 Walling's, 1875 Beers Maps, 1889 Atlas
Chelmsford Street Directories
Joseph Orphant, James Olney Sept. 15, 1980
Lowell Daily Courier, Dec. 12, 1881: obituary Thomas Jefferson Adams
Field trip Oct. 30, 2001: Florence H. Gullion

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

Town
CHELMSFORD

Property Address
15-21 DUNSTABLE RD.

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Historical Narrative

In 1904 the property was sold out of the Adams family to James W. Stevens. Mr. Stevens was a contractor and builder, who did "jobbing of all kinds" and lived not far away on Tyngsboro Rd. During the week previous to Dec. 19, 1908 masons were "at work laying the brick walls on the annexes to James Stevens' block on the Dunstable road." By June 27, 1909 "contractor James Stevens is enlarging the brick house on the Dunstable road by building an addition on each end." Unfortunately, the construction done at this time was rather poor, in contrast to the sturdy, well built original center section. Four tenants then occupied the building.

By 1980 the property, had deteriorated so much that it was labeled as "the worst eyesore" in Vinal Square" until the brick façade was refurbished. Since restoration inside and out, the building has been used as a four-unit apartment house and an office.



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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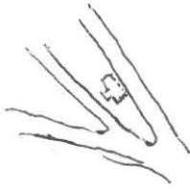
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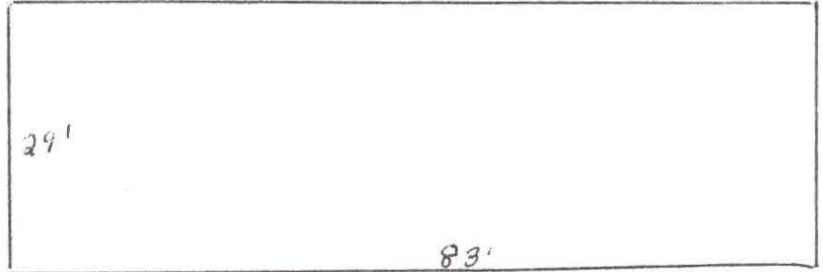
Alterations



Beers Atlas
1875



Walling's Map
1889



Chelmsford Assessors' records
1970, 2002



OCT. 16, 1980

Revitalization moves ahead

By SUE CARMAN

Vinal Square commercial revitalization took a giant step forward this week as Steve Olney put the finishing touches on the apartment building he has been renovating.

"The loan subsidy puts the frosting on the cake," stated Olney, describing the financial support he has received from the HUD grant money administered by the Chelmsford Office of Community Development. "I don't think I would have been able to do the whole thing," he added.

Olney, a Chelmsford resident, purchased the rundown building in Vinal Square a year ago. Built in 1835 as a reed factory, it was used for about thirty years before being converted to a two-family home. In 1900 an addition was placed on either end of the building and it has been used as a four-unit

apartment house since that time.

Olney began doing research last spring and found out through the Northern Middlesex Area Commission that the Vinal Square revitalization grant had been funded by HUD. After Bernie Lynch was hired as the Director of the Office of Community Development, Olney contacted him about the commercial revitalization component of the program.

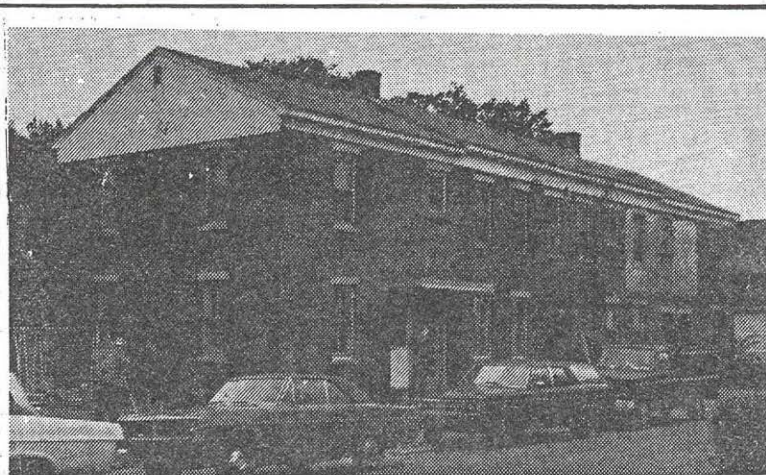
Through Lynch's assistance, the Boston Historical Commission was contacted to verify the accuracy of methods and materials to be used. Olney and his men then painstakingly undertook the restoration piecemeal, particularly the tedious job of cleaning the defaced brick exterior. Special masonry drills were used to clean out

REVITALIZATION, page 8



VINAL SQUARE REVITALIZATION Chelmsford resident Steve Olney stands in front of the apartment building he has meticulously renovated. (Photo by Susan Schontag)

Chelmsford Independent T Nov. 29, 1980



PRE-RENOVATION Steve Olney's Vinal Square building before he began the laborious renovation process.

Revitalization

continued from page 1

some of the old mortar and the replacement mortar was made of lime, sand and a small amount of Portland cement in a manner similar to the one our forefathers used.

Olney's original bid estimates were "astronomical", he stated, nearing the \$20 thousand mark. By doing some of the work himself, he reduced the impact to \$12 thousand.

In addition, Olney will benefit from the loan subsidy sponsored by the OCD. Whatever the interest on the loan would be on the open market, OCD Director Bernie Lynch explains, would be reduced to 8 percent. The owner would then make a monthly payment calculated on the 8 percent rate. "The Office for Community Development makes up the difference," Lynch stated, by placing the lump sum difference into a special account to be drawn upon by the bank.

Lynch is hopeful that other business people will show interest in "cleaning up the square." The projects need not be

as extensive as Olney's, with an average "ballpark figure of \$5000" for an individual project. Projects could range from a new sign to a complete facelifting such as Olney's.

Lynch now has his development team in place, already working on Vinal Square projects. Bob Thorlton, a construction specialist, joined the staff several months ago and will provide cost estimates for the commercial revitalization section. Chelmsford resident Joe Perry joined the staff last week as a senior draftsman. Perry, who has extensive experience in renovation types of construction and a side interest in art, completed his schooling at ITT nights. Perry stated that his function will be to "find out what they want and to put it on paper," helping create drawings for design changes.

Lynch, who is also spearheading the home revitalization project in North Chelmsford, encourages area businessmen to contact him to discuss what they would like to have done.



15-21 Dunstable Road

1/9/2005 F. Merriam





15-21 Dunstable Road

1/9/2005 F. Merriam