

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

28/92/52	Westford		CLM.86
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**Town/City:** Chelmsford

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 197-199 Main Street

**Historic Name:** George S. Messenger House

**Uses:** Present: multiple-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** 1827

**Source:** deed and tax record research

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Detached garage

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Change of use to two-family residence

mid-19<sup>th</sup> c.: bay window additions

Ca. 2000 rear wood ramp addition

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** .45 A

**Setting:** The house is located approximately 35' northwest of Main Street. Asphalt drives are located to the north and south of the house with the south leading to the detached garage. A wood rail fence with granite posts is along the front of the lot. The area includes 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. residential 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

197-199 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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 2.5-story building has a granite foundation, walls clad in wood clapboard with wood trim, and an asphalt-shingled side gable roof with gable returns. Two internal brick chimneys are located along the ridgeline of the roof near the gable ends. Most windows throughout the house are historic, wood, two-over-two, double-hung sash windows with wood surrounds and decorative shutters. The primary (southeast) façade is five symmetrical bays wide. The second story includes a single window in each bay. The first story includes one-story bay windows in the north and south bays. Windows within the bays appear to be historic, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows and also feature wood surrounds and decorative shutters. The center bay of the first story features a projecting porch with a layout similar to the bay windows. The porch has a granite floor, flat roof, wood railing, and square wood columns. The historic wood and glass entry door has a simple wood surround. The main mass of the house is two bays deep with single windows in each bay, including one window on the half story below the gable peak. The northeast wall features a one-story projection (the projection appears on the 1875 and 1899 maps of West Chelmsford, and therefore, may be original to the building) at its north corner. The projection has a side gable roof and walls clad in wood clapboard. The southeast wall is two bays wide with the main entry into the 197 unit in the south bay and a single window in the north. The southwest wall extends one bay beyond the main mass of the building. A one-story porch is along the depth of this wall and features a shed roof, wood railings, and squared wood columns. A wood ramp is located at the west end of the wall.

The detached, single-car garage is located approximately 20' from the rear of the building. The garage has a granite foundation, wood clapboard walls, a front gable roof, and a replacement garage door.

The building is a good example of the Classical Revival style and retains historic integrity of location, setting, materials, 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.*

The Inventory Form completed for the property in 1977 by Jane B. Drury and Diane Fay of the Chelmsford Historical Commission provides a history of the property through that date.

This house was one of four early residences constructed to house workers at Deacon John Farwell's scythe factory on Stony Brook. Farwell relocated to West Chelmsford from Fitchburg to start the factory in the 1820s. In 1827 George Messenger (1798-1860) purchased this property from Farwell and within the year erected the house. George and his brother Elias also arrived to West Chelmsford from Fitchburg, so it appears they were already connected with Farwell; however, research did not discover if they were related. George returned to Fitchburg in 1840 and sold the property to Farwell's son Thomas T. Farwell. Both George and Elias eventually returned to Fitchburg, and are buried there; the reasons for their returns were not discovered.

Thomas Farwell retained the property until 1857 at the latest. The year John N. and Abbie Perry purchased the property. John (1819-1885 and is buried in West Chelmsford Cemetery) was a storekeeper in at 212 Main Street (CLM.367) as well as a selectman. Abbie (1825-1901) remained in the house until her death (she is also buried in West Chelmsford Cemetery). In 1919 August P. Nelson (born ca. 1864 in Sweden) purchased the property and retained it until 1946. Nelson is listed in the 1930 US Population Census as living on Main Street with wife Agnes (born ca. 1863 in Sweden) and daughter Ellen (born ca. 1895 in Sweden). All three family members became naturalized US citizens in 1913. At this date August was listed as a stone cutter in a quarry and Ellen was a bookkeeper at t shoe factory. August's father, Carl, resided at 203 Main Street (CLM.87).

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Since the 1977 survey of the property it has not experienced any major structural changes and has remained under the ownership of the Patenaude family, who purchased it in March 1950.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Beers, F.W. *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*. J.B. Beers & Co., New York. 1875.

Chelmsford Historical Commission Files. Jane Drury collection of materials for 197 Main Street.

Drury, Jane and Diane Fay. Massachusetts Historical Commission Inventory Form, "J.N. Perry House." CLM.86. 1977.

Geo. H. Walker & Co. *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Geo. H. Walker & Co., Boston, MA. 1889.

Middlesex North Registry of Deeds

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

The area of West Chelmsford is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a locally significant historic district under Criterion A for the development of this area around the Roby Manufacturing Company and Chelmsford Woolen Mills as well as under Criterion C for its intact examples of mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century residential architecture. The boundary of the proposed district would include resources built during the period of significance along Main Street from approximately Loiselle Lane in the north to the Westford Town Line, as well as resources along School Street between Main Street and Graniteville Road. This building at 197 Main Street would be a contributing resource to that district as an early example of residential architecture in the area that retains most historic integrity.

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197 Main Street,  
facing southwest.  
November 2015.



Garage, facing  
northwest.  
November 2015.