

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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Billerica

CLM.431

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

Town/City: Chelmsford

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

Photograph



View looking northeast from Manning Road.

Address: 21 Manning Road

Historic Name: Oliver and Deborah Pierce House

Uses: Present: Single-family dwelling

Original: Single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1769

Source: Marriage date

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder: Not known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, cut

Wall/Trim: Vinyl siding and trim

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Garage (mid-20th C)

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Vinyl siding and replacement windows and doors (late 20th or early 21st C). Rear ell (2008)

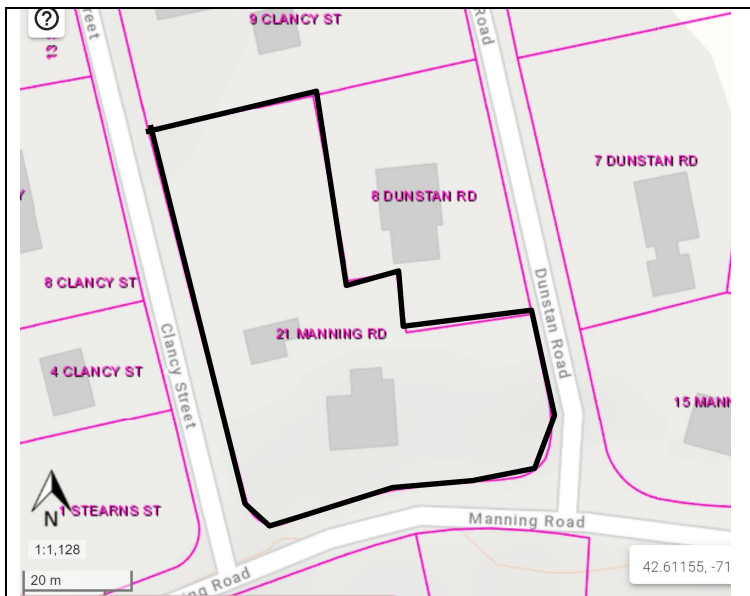
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.7 acre

Setting: Wooded residential neighborhood of early-mid 20thC residences and one 18th-C residence. Highway 495 is located across the street.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies, Historic Preservation Cons. for

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date: March 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

21 MANNING 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 is oriented to the south toward Manning Road. A one-story enclosed porch is attached to the west elevation and a 2-story ell is attached to the rear elevation. A short asphalt-paved driveway leads to a shed-roof, one-car detached garage located near the west property line. The house is located close to the road, separated from it by a row of tall shrubbery and a narrow, grassy yard. The level lot is planted in grass with mature trees at the property boundaries.

The house consists of a two-story main block constructed in the mid-late 18th century. The house is five bays wide and two bays deep on the west elevation and three bays deep on the east elevation. The house rests on a foundation of cut stone slabs and is capped with a side-gabled roof with a very shallow overhang. The house appears to have been constructed in two phases, as evidenced by the different distances between the west two bays and the center entrance and the two east bays and the center entrance. The two east window bays and the entrance bay were constructed first. The large brick chimney, now located off-center to the west, is located at what would have been the west end of the house. The two west bays were added to the house at a later date.

The building is sheathed with vinyl siding and vinyl trim. Windows are recent 1/1 vinyl sash replacements with interior *faux* muntins. The main entrance, centered on the south façade, contains a metal (?) door with six lights in the top quarter. The front step consists of a cut stone slab. A 1-story porch on the west elevation is enclosed with four windows on the west elevation and three windows on the north and south elevations. The porch rests on cut stone piers.

Interior inspections were beyond the scope of this survey, but a closer examination of surviving framing, floorplans, and interior features and finishes by an architectural historian could provide additional insights into a likely original construction date and on the physical evolution of the building over time.

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.

21 Manning Road was likely constructed for Oliver Pierce 2nd (1742-1821)¹ and his wife, Deborah Stevens Pierce (1745-1837), who were married in 1769 in Chelmsford. Waters' *History of Chelmsford* states that brothers Stephen Pierce and Oliver Pierce constructed houses at the "end" of Manning Road.² This appears to be Stephen Pierce (1754-1826)³ and Oliver Pierce 2nd, sons of Oliver Pierce (1709-1784)⁴ and his second wife, Hannah Adams Pierce.

Oliver Pierce 2nd and Deborah Pierce had four daughters and a son, Oliver Pierce 3rd (1783-1863).⁵ Census records from the 1850s and 1860 include Oliver Pierce 3rd living at 21 Manning Road. Pierce was unmarried but did share the house with several farm laborers and a housekeeper.

¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18169145/oliver-pierce>. Accessed Dec. 28, 2021.

² Waters: 399. Waters notes that the father of Stephen and Oliver Pierce was Stephen Pierce. This author's research indicates that the father was Oliver Pierce. More research is recommended.

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18169149/stephen-pierce>. Accessed Dec. 28, 2021.

⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126963848/oliver-peirce>. Accessed Dec. 28, 2021.

⁵ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18169144/oliver-pierce>. Accessed Dec. 28, 2021.

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After Oliver Pierce's death in 1863, the house and property were inherited by Pierce's resident housekeeper, Ruth Rea, and her husband, Frederick Rea. The Reas sold the property soon thereafter.

In 1864, Abby H. Dix, and her husband, John Dix, purchased the property, which included the house and a cranberry meadow on Hales Brook.⁶ Farmer John Dix (1821-1881)⁷ lived here with Abby (1805-1886)⁸ and their son, Royal.⁹

Real estate broker John M. G. Parker of Lowell purchased 21 Manning Road in 1882 from widow Abby Dix. It does not appear that he made Manning Road his residence.¹⁰ Parker died only a few years later, in 1888.

In 1919, Frank W. Sadler, purchased the house and 75 acres surrounding it from Parker's daughters¹¹ with plans to develop the property into the "Fairacres" residential subdivision.¹² A few houses were constructed soon thereafter, but Sadler sold 21 Manning Road and most of the property to Mary Stickney Blanchard in 1920 and 1926.¹³

Leo and Lena Demers owned 21 Manning Road from 1941 until 2000.¹⁴ Leo G. Demers owned a trucking business.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Middlesex North Registry of Deeds.

Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

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Massachusetts Vital Records. Ancestry.com.

Massachusetts Marriage records. Ancestry.com.

United States Census. Ancestry.com.

Walker, George H. & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co., 1889.

Walling, Henry Francis. *Map of Middlesex County*. Boston: Smith & Bumstead, 1856.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

⁶ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 59, p. 509.

⁷ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154936984/john-adams-dix>. Accessed March 4, 2022.

⁸ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154937336/abigail-h-dix>. Accessed March 4, 2022.

⁹ Massachusetts Census. 1865.

¹⁰ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 152, p. 594.

¹¹ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 617, 29.

¹² Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Plan Book 37, Plan 40.

¹³ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 627, p. 493 and Book 741, p. 304.

¹⁴ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds Book 984, p. 595 and Book 10981, p. 176.

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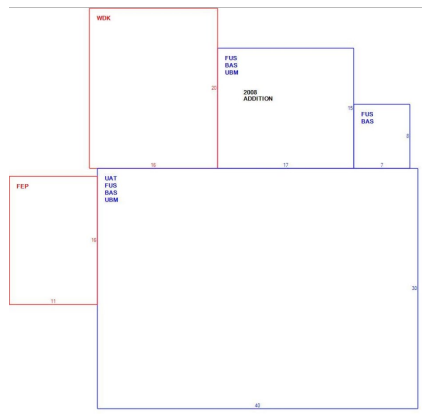
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View looking northeast from Manning Road, west elevation.



Assessor's sketch