

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/19/11	Nashua South		CLM.382
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Town/City: Chelmsford

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

Photograph



Address: 20 Middlesex Street

Historic Name: Benjamin and Thomas Jefferson Adams House

Uses: Present: condominiums

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: between 1831 and 1856

Source: 1831 and 1856 maps of Chelmsford

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: unknown

Wall/Trim: brick/wood

Roof: slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Ca. 1960 porch removal

Ca. 1980 installation of skylights

1980 conversion to condominiums

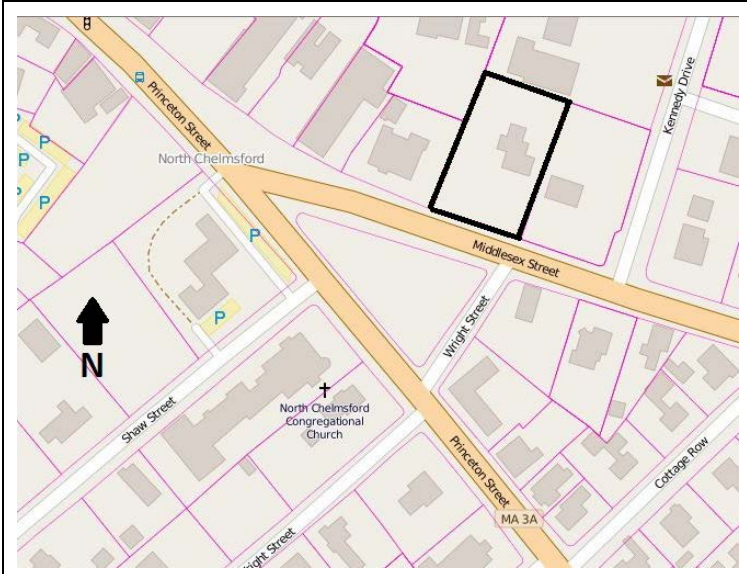
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: less than 1 acre

Setting: The building is located approximately 80' north of Middlesex St. The front space is a flat landscaped area with mature shrubs and trees. A drive along the west side leads to a building to the rear. The surrounding area includes 19th and 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

20 MIDDLESEX STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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 brick walls and a cross gable slate roof. Internal brick chimneys are located on the north slope of the cross gable and on the west slope of the front gable. At least four skylights have been installed on the roof; two on the west slope, one on the east slope of the front gable, and one on the south slope of the cross gable. Windows throughout the building are 15-pane casement windows that feature stone lintels and sills as well as wooden shutters. The primary (south) façade of the cross gable is three bays wide with single windows in the first and second story bays. The half story features a simply molded pediment with a centrally located fanlight. A one-bay wide, three-bay deep, one-story enclosed porch is located within the west ell of the building. The porch features sets of 12-pane wood and glass doors. Its flat roof is accessible from the second story and it's enclosed with metal fencing. A one-story, one-bay wing is also located at the east end of the primary façade. This flat roof is also accessible from the second story and is enclosed with metal fencing. Maps from 1889 through 1950 show a one-story porch around the perimeter of the building, but this is no longer extant.

The building is a good example of the Greek Revival style and retain historic integrity of location, setting, 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 building does not appear on the 1831 map of Chelmsford, but is present on the 1856 map of the area; therefore, it was likely constructed between these dates. The 1856 map indicated that Benjamin and Thomas Adams owned the building as well as several others throughout North Chelmsford. By 1875 Thomas assumed sole ownership of the property and this property is noted as his residence. The 1855 Massachusetts State Census lists Thomas J. Adams (1805-1881) living in North Chelmsford and working as a farmer. The 1860 U.S. Population Census shows that Adams owned \$19,000 in real estate and \$13,200 in personal estate. Adams also founded the reed factory on Dunstable Road (CLM.4) and operated a tavern with his brother Benjamin (1801-1876). Benjamin also owned several properties across North Chelmsford. Thomas Adams died in 1881, and the property transferred to his widow Clara (1827-1900). The 1889 map shows Clara living at this address as Mrs. T.J. Adams. The 1900 US Population Census lists Clara living in Chelmsford (no street address is given) with two servants. The 1900-1901 Chelmsford City Directory lists Clara as Thomas's widow, living on Main Street (now called Middlesex), north of Wright, which is this property. Clara died in 1900 and her estate sold the property in 1903 to John F. McCoy. It appears McCoy never lived at this address as available city directories and census records during his period of ownership list his residence on Boston Road. In late 1920 McCoy sold the property to siblings Ethel R. Murray, J. Earl Wotton, and Ruth G. Robinson. In 1935 Murray and Wotton sold their shares of the property to Robinson. It appears none lived at this address; although Robinson is listed in 1937 directory as residing across the street at 25 Middlesex. Research did not complete the chain of ownership between 1935 and 1980. In 1980, however, the property was converted from a single-family residence into three condominium units by an organization called New Earth Professional Career Condominiums. The building remains divided into three units.

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