

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/32/1	Nashua South	G	CLM.383
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Town/City: Chelmsford

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

Photograph



Address: 25 Middlesex Street

Historic Name: Benjamin and Thomas Jefferson Adams House

Uses: Present: single-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: between 1831 and 1856

Source: 1831 and 1856 maps of North Chelmsford

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding/wood

Roof: asphalt single

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Ca. 1920 removal of carriage house, wing, and south portion of house

Ca. 1960 entry and rear additions

Ca. 2000 replacement siding and windows

Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .28 A

Setting: The building is located at the NE corner of Middlesex and Wright sts, approximately 10' from the road. The parcel includes a flat grassy area east of the house enclosed by a modern metal fence. A low stone retaining wall runs along the north side of the parcel. A paved parking area is located behind the house off of Wright St.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Jennifer Burden, Gray & Pape, Inc.

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

25 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 a stone foundation, asphalt shingled side gable roof with gable returns, and is clad in replacement vinyl siding with wood trim. One brick chimney is located at the south end of the west slope of the roof. Historically, a large brick chimney was located along the ridgeline of the roof, but this has since been removed (see below for photograph). Windows throughout the house are replacement, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows and feature decorative shutters. The primary (east) façade is five symmetrical bays wide with single windows in all bays except the center bay of the first story. This bay includes the main entry and features a replacement door and sidelights. A one-bay, front gable porch hood supported by round wood columns shelters the entry. The hood is a later addition to the house as it does not appear in the photograph below. The building is two bays deep with single windows in each bay of the north wall. The south wall includes single windows on the second story and an enclosed porch on the first story. The rear (west) wall is four bays wide with single windows in each bay; the three south bays on the first story feature smaller windows.

As the photograph below illustrates, the house was once longer to the south and included a two-story wing that connected to a 2.5-story livery. The 1907 Sanborn map shows that these buildings were still extant at this date; however, a 1938 aerial view indicates the buildings were removed by then.

The resource is an altered example of a mid-nineteenth century building. It retains historic integrity of location, 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 North Chelmsford, but is present on the 1856 map. The building, therefore, was constructed between these dates. The 1856 map shows that B & T.J. Adams owned this property that included a livery stable. Benjamin (1801-1876) and Thomas Jefferson (1805-1881) Adams owned several properties throughout North Chelmsford. Thomas established the reed factory on Dunstable Road (CLM.4) and the brothers operated a tavern in town. Deed research was not able to form a complete chain of ownership, but the 1875 map shows that G. Bancroft owned the property as early as this date; however, no further information was discovered about Bancroft. By 1889 the property was owned by someone with the last name of Williams (no first name or initial is provided). A review of Grantee Index records from this period did not provide information to match this name with the lot. According to a Town Annual Report and city directories, however, from 1891 through 1917 Melissa Tyler ran a boarding house at this location. Tyler, née Towle, was a sister of Simon Towle, who was a preeminent photographer whose work in Chelmsford spanned from 1860 through 1910. Tyler was also an aunt of Ella (Gilchest) Moore, the wife of George C. Moore. By 1911 George C. Moore (born ca. 1849) owned the property. Moore was the founder of the Moore Spinning Company that would become the Silesia Woolen Mills and later the US Worsted Company. The 1912 Chelmsford City Directory lists Moore as a manufacturer of worsted yarns and the treasurer of the North Chelmsford Machine Company. Moore resided at 16-20 Wright Street from 1882 until his death in 1923, and therefore, did not live at this location. In 1919 Moore granted ownership of the property to the US Worsted Company. The company kept the property until 1930 when they granted it to Ruth and Percy Robinson. According to census and city directory research, the Robinsons lived at this address during their period of ownership. Percy (born ca. 1891) is listed as the fire chief for Chelmsford in 1930 and a garage owner in 1940. The Robinsons sold the property in 1958, and since this date has been transferred nine additional times.

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Genealogical research, including U.S. and Massachusetts census records; birth, marriage, and death records; and city directory records from ancestry.com.

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Merriam, Fred. *Images of America: North and West Chelmsford*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina. 2016.

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Walling, Henry F. *Map of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Smith & Bumstead, Boston, MA. 1856.

Waters, Dr. Wilson. *The History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Lowell, Mass., 1917.



House at 25 Middlesex Street, date of photograph is unknown. (Chelmsford Public Library.)

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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 North Chelmsford was determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP by MHC in 1987 for its local level of historical significance. The historic district boundary of Area G roughly includes resources along Middlesex and Princeton streets between Wright Street, Gay Street, and Edwards Avenue. The district is eligible under Criterion A for its local association with the industrialization of North Chelmsford in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and under Criterion C for its examples of workers' cottages, modest single-family houses, and elaborate residences owned by local industrialists. The building at 25 Middlesex Street retains sufficient historic integrity to contribute to this potential historic district.