

**FORM B – BUILDING**

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

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

13/19/15	Tyngsboro		139
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Town Chelmsford

Place (neighborhood or village)

North Chelmsford

Address 34 Middlesex Street

Historic Name Dr. Varney House

Uses: Present unoccupied

Original 1 family residence & doctor's office

Date of Construction 1901

Source Lowell Courier, Lowell Sunday Sun

Assessors' tax records; 12/30/1899 Deed Bk. 315, pg. 544

Style/Form Federal Revival

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation huge cut granite blocks

Wall/Trim siding

Roof hip

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures  
 attached barn, 1901, slightly after the house

Major Alterations (with dates)  
 see attached

Condition good

Moved  no  yes Date

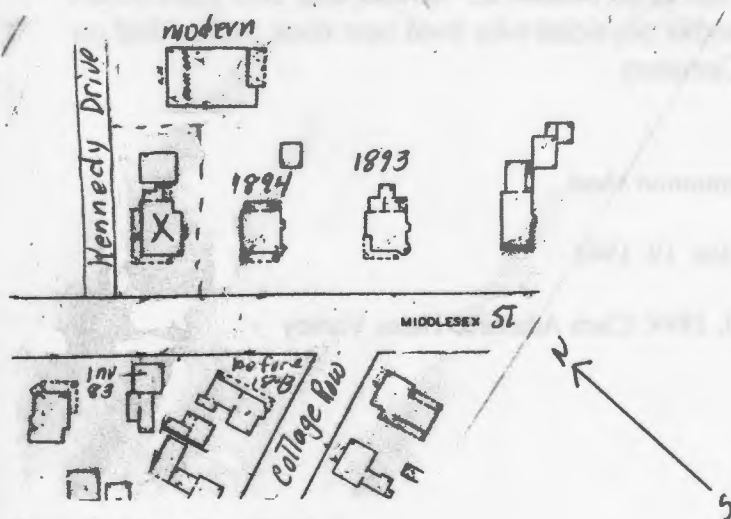
Acreage 13,500 sq. ft.

Setting in edge of residential area, on a main street  
 right side: dwellings of a similar period  
 left side & rear: post office, commercial complex  
 opposite side of street: residential



**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.



Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month / year) September 2004

## 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 dwelling at 34 Middlesex Street is a Federal Revival style house, 2½ stories, with 14 rooms originally. It was described as a "mansion" in 1901 newspaper. It has 3 bays by 3 bays and measures 36 ft. (front) by 44 ft. (sides). The front porch has a railing with spindled balusters as well as on top of the porch. Another spindled balustrade (widow's walk) is located on the hip roof. A similar but smaller porch is located on the left (north) side of the house. There are dentils under the eaves of the main house. A Palladian window on the third floor is above the main door. An oval window is located just to the left of the main door. Scrolled brackets are located under the front bay window (right of main door) and under the bay widow on the right side, second story. Corner boards are plain. There are two tall, narrow, chimneys: one of the left side, the other on the right. Three dormers project from the roof, the one on the façade being fancier than those on the sides.

### 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.*

In Oct. 1901 the ground was prepared for the erection of this house at 34 Middlesex St. in North Chelmsford. Its foundation was laid in April 1901, and by July 14<sup>th</sup> "Dr. Varney's new mansion in Main street is taking shape and is likely to be completed before the snow flies." In the middle of January 1902 Dr. Varney "moved into his new house at last." His office and waiting room were at the left rear of the dwelling, and he lived in the rest of the house with his wife Helen and two children, John C. and Marion.

Helen Varney died of pneumonia at age 66 years on January 31, 1929. The doctor knew the Hyde family which resided on nearby Edwards Ave. and were "pillars of the North Congregational Church." Four and a half months later Dr. Varney married Miss Adeline (Addie) Hyde amid much talk. However, the doctor remained well respected among his patients for many years afterwards. Mrs. Varney was a graduate of Framingham Normal school, and prior to her marriage taught in the public schools in Chelsea. Dr. Varney died of a heart attack June 8, 1944 and is buried in the Lowell Cemetery. Addie remained in the house alone but by the age of 80 became an "invalid, and two years before her death her guardian sold the house to J. Edmund Boucher, another physician who lived next door. Addie died on Christmas Day, 1955 and is buried with her family in Riverside Cemetery.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Lowell Courier: Monday, Oct. 15, 1900  
Lowell Sunday telegram: Apr. 21, 1901; July 14, 1901; Jan. 8, 1902; Jan. 19, 1902  
Tax records & Real Erstate Valuations  
Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, bk. 315, pg. 544, Dec. 30, 1899; Clara Adams to Helen Varney  
Ruth Delaney: Sept. 7, 1983  
Mildred Wahlgren: Dec. 11, 1984  
Charlotte DeWolf: Jan. 8, 1989  
Town Clerk's records  
Assessor's records  
Building Inspector's records  
David Hedison (Housing Authority): Aug. 16, 2004  
Housing Authority reports: Mar. 19, 1974; Sept. 22, 1980  
Riverside Cemetery records  
Street directories: 1898 - 1958

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  
**34 MIDDLESEX ST.**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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**Historical Significance**

The Boucher family had lived next door since 1945. Shortly before Addie Varney's death in 1955, Edmund Boucher rented 34 Middlesex Street to Margaret M. Harrington and her widowed father, Frank J. Harrington, who moved here from Lowell. Margaret was a registered nurse and her father was a retired railroad engineer. In 1955 Edmund, then almost 60 years old and a doctor, moved in with the Harringtons. They remained together in the house at 34 Middlesex Street until 1968, when Edmund died and the house was sold to Margaret Harrington by his estate. Frank Harrington died of heart disease in July 1970, and on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1971 Margaret, then 55 years old, married James McHugh of Leominster. Margaret sold the property two months later. The house was used as a group home until June 1973, when it was sold to the Chelmsford Housing Authority, under whose ownership it continued to be a home for mentally disabled people. It has been empty since late 2002 and will be soon sold. The State Housing Authority hoped that it would be torn down to make way for low income housing, but that was turned by local authorities. It is too beautiful a building to be demolished.

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**Town  
**CHELMSFORD**Property Address  
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**Alterations**

unknown dates:

before 1970: main house and barn were connected

after 1970: bow window right of front door: probably added? It doesn't really fit the architecture. (see picture); noy on assessors' 1970 diagram

1974

an apartment made where Doctor's office was: 1<sup>st</sup> floor, rear left  
new kitchen

existing wood posts replaced with new concrete fitted steel posts

new boiler room installed

plastered partition between rooms 107 &amp; 108 removed

room 108: new door, frame &amp; trim, new window frame

some new bed closet doors; some other new doors

railing around porch roof removed; porch restored

1980

architect: Peter Samaris, 120 Parker St., Lawrence

new fiberglass insulation under attic floors; attic floor boards covered with unpainted 3/8" thick plywood  
wood steps & framing:

front entrance porch removed

existing front porch wood floor and all damaged or rotted framing below - replaced

right side: 3 steps to porch: new railing; wood steps &amp; granite bottom step replaced with new concrete steps &amp; W.I. rails

wood rails &amp; balusters for front porch &amp; widow's walk repaired; Fred Grant went to mill to get ones close to original

wrought iron railing built for concrete &amp; stone steps at front &amp; side porches

loose or damaged lattice work below porches replaced

widow's walk rails built up

steel bulkhead near side porch replaced with new steel bulkhead

new interior hard wood handrails given natural finish

kitchen: #107 floor removed, including sub-floor; new resilient flooring to meet existing floor at existing level

bath #206: existing tub, dwarf pipe wall &amp; lavatory removed

lavatory #108: metal shower &amp; side wall removed

new bathroom shower units: bath #109, tub in bath #206, lavatory in bath #206

new crown mouldings at new ceiling

new door between rooms #104 &amp; 105, matching existing door. Existing hardware used.

Before 1988: new wall siding

Fall 2000:

front porch: dry rot removed

widow's walk: much dry rot removed

old horse walk at lower left side of house: has some infestation, but State Housing Authority would just want it torn out rather than saved, so it has not been worked on. The horse walk is under the garage; access to it is down behind the driveway at the lower garden level.

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**ALTERATIONS**

Aug. 19, 2004; digital camera, by W.H. Drury

*Front (east side)*



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**ALTERATIONS**

Aug. 19, 2004; digital camera, by W.H. Drury



*South side (right)*



*South side*



*South side of barn rear of barn*



*North wall of barn-connecting area-main house*

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Aug. 19, 2004; digital camera, by W.H. Drury



*North wall looking east  
Left side of house*



*North side, looking west*



*Facing south*



*Facing north*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

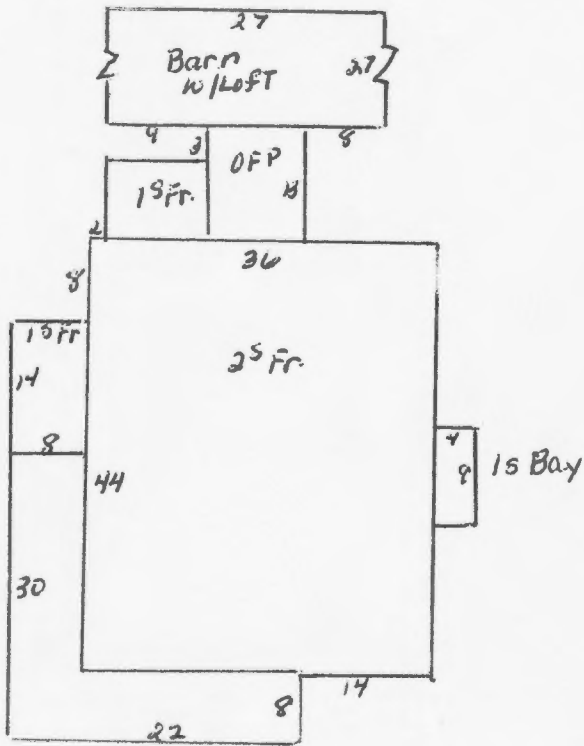
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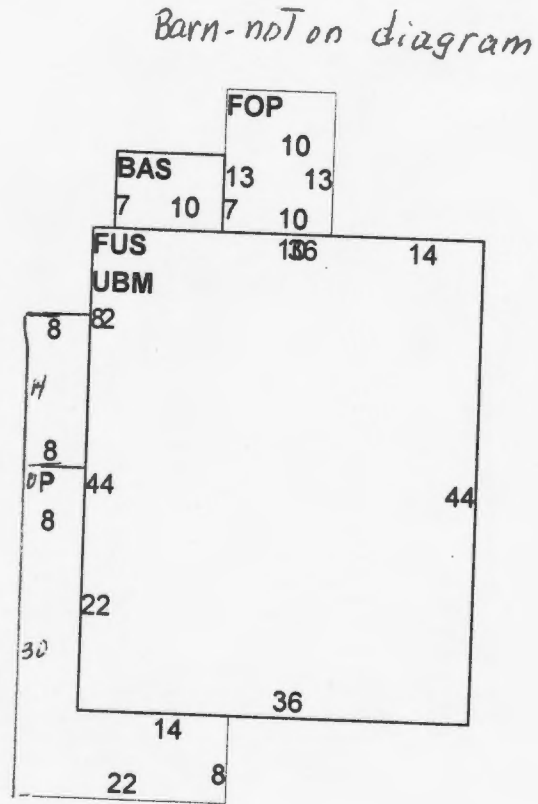
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Assessors' Records



9/23/1970



8/5/2004



DK2070

34 Middlesex Street

Book 2070, page 567      6/18/1973      James F. & Maura D. Dolan, 12 School St., Groton, to Chelmsford Housing Authority Eminent Domain 13,500 sq. ft. & buildings thereon

Book 1963, page 658      6/17/1971      Margaret M. McHugh, formerly Harrington, Leominster, to James F. & Maura D. Dolan, 12 School St., Groton \$32,000 13,500 sq. ft. & buildings thereon

Middlesex Probate #427863      1968      Estate of Edmund J. Boucher to Margaret M. Harrington

Book 1215, page 59      1/05/1953      Guardian of Addie M. Varney to J. Edmund Boucher \$14,000 13,500 sq. ft. & buildings thereon subject: building restriction

Middlesex Probate #166272      1928      Estate of Helen M. Varney

Book 315, page 544      12/30/1899      Clara A.H. Adams, widow, to Helen M. Varney, wife of Fred E. Varney \$1 13,500 sq. ft. land subject: building restriction

Compiled by J. Drury, August 1984

*[Handwritten signatures and stamps]*  
Approved as to form  
THOMAS C. DOLAN  
Notary Public  
Date: June 18 1973

PAID	INDEX	FILED	FILED
✓	✓	✓	✓

2070  
547

*cc: Jay & Andy*



Department of Mental Health  
North East Area  
Dr. Harry C. Solomon Mental Health Center/Lowell Site Office  
391 Varnum Avenue  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854

- Jane Swift  
Governor
- William D. O'Leary  
Secretary
- Marylou Sudders  
Commissioner
- Carla M. Saccone  
Area Director
- Kathleen Bown  
Center Director

Telephone: (978) 322-5000

Fax: (978) 322-5077  
TDD: (978) 458-6142

RECEIVED  
SEP 27 2001  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Bernard Lynch  
Town Manager  
50 Billerica Road  
Chelmsford, Ma 01824

September 24, 2001

Dear Mr. Lynch,

This is to inform you that an adult residential program funded by the Department of Mental Health will be temporarily relocating to 34 Middlesex Street, North Chelmsford. This is intended to be an interim home for six adults who have long term mental illnesses, who have been residing in a community program in Lowell. The program facility in Lowell is undergoing renovations that make it necessary to vacate the premises during construction. We are projecting a move in date of October or November, 2001.

Greater Lynn Mental Health and Retardation Association, Inc. a non-profit organization that has been successfully serving adults with mental illnesses for 27 years, will operate the program. Including this program, Greater Lynn Mental Health is currently operating nine such facilities in the Greater Lowell area.

The home on Middlesex Street is property of the Chelmsford Housing Authority, and previously served as a home for mentally retarded adults. As a DMH funded facility, it will be inspected and licensed by the Department of Mental Health, and will be brought up to full compliance on all matters of resident safety. The house will be fully staffed with trained, professional staff on duty at all times residents are in the facility, seven days per week.