

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.	Form no.
	210

Town Chelmsford

Address Mill Road

Name Schoolhouse #4 (South Row)

Present use none

Present owner Town of Chelmsford

3. Description:

Date 1870

Source Town Clerk's records

Style \_\_\_\_\_

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features \_\_\_\_\_

Altered see attached Date \_\_\_\_\_

Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:

14,500 sq. ft.

One acre or less x Over one acre 74 feet Boston Rd.

Approximate frontage 74 feet Mill Rd.

Approximate distance of building from street

ca 23 feet

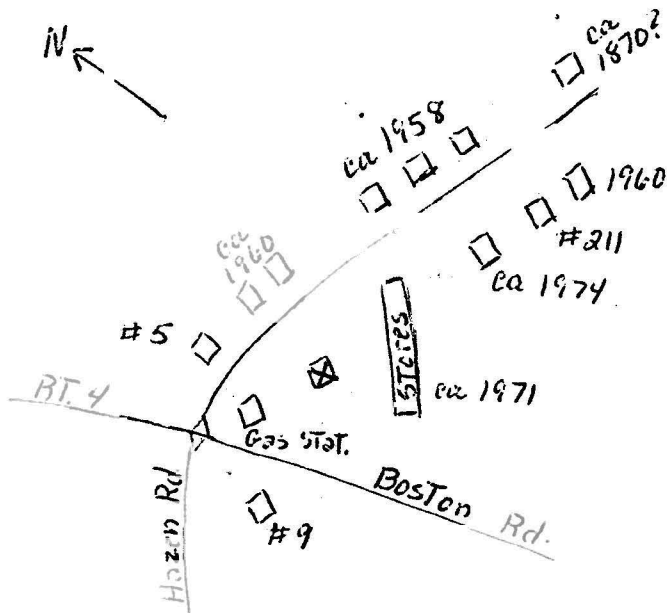
6. Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization Chelmsford Hist. Commission

Date November 20, 1976

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location  
in relation to nearest cross streets and  
other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Inhabitants of Town of Chelmsford

Original use school

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates V.F.W. -discontinued use ca 1974  
South Row Village Improvement Assoc.-using it 1955

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	Conservation		Recreation
Agricultural	Education	<u>x</u>	Religion
Architectural	Exploration/ settlement		Science/ invention
The Arts	Industry		Social/ humanitarian
Commerce	Military		Transportation
Communication	Political		
Community development		<u>x</u>	

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This building is the 2nd of 3 school buildings in the area called the South Row School. A modern school of this name is located a short distance south, on Boston Rd. The 1st was a brick structure on the opposite side of Mill Rd. from the inventoried school, was built in 1801 and torn down about 1958.

In 1870 use of the old brick school was apparently discontinued and no school sessions held until the new building was completed. The total cost was \$2149.26, including \$200 from the land and \$212.40 for furniture. In 1876 blackboards were built at a cost of \$1.30, and in 1879 a fence was built for \$50. The 1st 4 grades and 1 teacher occupied the building. In 1924-5 a new heavy wire fence was built around the property and a water system provided -"for many years the only water that the occupants of that building had was that brought in pails, and very often became stagnant and unfit for drinking purposes." In 1925, there were 12 boys and 6 girls enrolled.

Eventually the school was closed and became the meeting place for the South Row Improvement Association, a civic minded group dedicated to the improvement of the South Row area of town. That group disbanded sometime after 1955, and the Veteran of Foreign Wars used the building as a social hall.

For the past 1½ years it has been unoccupied, but very recently the town has received a \$44,000 grant from HUD. This grant will be used to convert the building into a Senior Citizens Drop-In Center.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records early maps, etc.)

Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955

Town Clerk's records

Bk. 21, pg. 234 Sept. 19, 1870 Town Meeting

Bk. 21, pg. 259 March 6, 1871 Building Committee

1856 Walling's Map; 1875 Beers Atlas

Superintendent of Schools reports - 1897-8, 1924

School Committee report - 1925

Annual Town Report - 1921, 1876, 1879

Lowell Sun, June 14, 1976

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Chelmsford	Form No: 210
Property Name: Schoolhouse #4	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

3. Altered

1921 - \$1,249.88 fire damage

1924 - new heating system, hard wood floor, painted inside & out,  
new entrance:

changed from an entrance indented about 4 feet with 2  
entrance doors (remains of old clapboards can still be  
seen) to a single door flush with the front door.

? small addition on left side at rear for rest room facilities,  
probably added by V.F.W.

1976 contemplated changes include:

new floor - pipe leaked over winter & floor ruined  
new window frames

old frames rotted - may not be able to get original size  
lower ceilings, carpet floor, take bar out (put in by V.F.W.)  
install ramp for wheel chairs.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

School House District No. 4 - Mill Road

1831 map: yes, east side of Mill Road.  
1856 map: yes, east side of Mill Road.  
1875 Beers Atlas: yes, between Mill Road & Boston Road

Chelmsford Town Clerk's Records:

Book 21, page 234: September 19, 1870 Town Meeting  
Report of Selectmen on Laying out - School house lot in District  
No. 4.

We, the Selectmen of Chelmsford, having been duly authorized  
by said town to purchase or take a building lot for School house in  
School District No. 4 so-called and having given legal notice; met  
September 3rd 1870 and proceeded to lay out a lot as follows, to  
wit:

Beginning at the corner of the wall 135 feet west of the old  
school house on the southerly side of the road leading to Russell's  
Mills; thence westerly 74 feet on said Russell road; thence 196  
feet south to the Boston road; thence easterly 74 feet along said  
Boston road; thence northerly by stone wall to the first point  
mentioned; said lot containg 14,500 feet, or about 1/3 of acre, all  
on the land of T.J. Pinkham, and we have estimated the damage to  
said Pinkham to be \$200.

Respectfully Submitted,  
E.F. Dupee }  
S.P. Perham } Selectmen  
S.F. Wright }

Book 21, page 259: March 6, 1871  
Report of School House Building Committee - School District No. 4.  
To laying foundation, mason work & grading \$ 236.86  
To building the house 1475.00  
To extra work on house 25.00  
To furniture, etc. 212.40  
\$1949.26

Chelmsford Newsweekly, 1955:

In 1792, the school administration was for the first time placed  
entirely in the hands of a school committee composed of nine members -  
one from each district or squadron. The school system immediately began  
to expand. School houses were built in the districts previously without  
them, and in 1800, there were 12 such schools, costing a total of \$600  
per year. The town could nor afford to maintain these schools and a  
grammar school as well, so the latter was given up. In 1802, the familiar  
red brick school house still standing in Forefathers Cemetery replaced  
the older one on that site. In 1801, another new brick building had been  
erected for school purposes on Mill Road; it is now the home of J. Clark  
Osterhout, a Chelmsford resident for 65 years. The brick for these  
buildings were made locally on what is now called Brick Kiln Road.

The brick district school houses were eventually replaced by neat  
white buildings in each section and these have now been superseded by  
the large consolidated school buildings in the Center and North sections.  
.....The South Row Village Improvement Association is housed in the  
wooden school building on Mill Rd. opposite its brick predecessor which  
was the last to be closed.



The Lowell Sun June 14, 1976

Sun staff photo by Dave Brown

### OLD SOUTH ROW SCHOOL HOUSE

will be fixed up to become an elderly drop-in center, if a \$25,000 HUD grant is approved

**With HUD grant**

# South Row School could become center for Chelmsford elderly

By **BOB JELTSCH**  
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD — The old South Row School on Mill Road doesn't look like much now.

Outside, the red paint is flaking off and many of the windows on the old one-room school house recently vacated by the VFW are broken. Weeds grow tall on the grounds.

Inside, a pipe broke over the winter, causing the floor to warp. When the weather got hot the interior steamed up, causing the paint on the walls and ceiling to peel there too.

"But the structure is basically sound," says town planner Robert Flynn. "The paint is coming off, but the walls are not damaged." And if the town's request for \$25,000 from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is granted, the place will be turned into a drop-in center for senior citizens.

The basic plan is to make the necessary repairs, which will include replacing some of the outside boards, putting in new window frames and repainting. The warped floor will

also be ripped out, and in its place plywood will be laid down as a base for a carpet.

"We also plan to put in central heating and air conditioning," said Flynn. Right now, there is an overhead heater which heats only one spot in the middle of the floor. Plumbing and electrical work will have to be redone as well.

**THESE ARE** things that would be done as part of any renovation project, but additional plans exist to make the building especially suited for elderly people. For instance, a ramp will be put in where the outside steps are now so people in wheel chairs can enter without too much difficulty. In the same vein, the toilets will have bars on them so people can lift themselves on.

The bar will be torn out, to the consternation of some, and in its place kitchen facilities will be installed, again with appliances low enough to the ground for handicapped people to reach.

"If they want to come in and cook up a recipe for apple pie or something, they can," said Flynn.

Also, an addition which will serve as a TV and movie room will be added to the rear of the building.

Besides being a social gathering place, dietary and nutritional workshops, along with medical clinics will take place there. A nurse's office may even be put in.

All this, of course, is dependent upon the approval by HUD of a \$25,000 grant, the application for which is a long process.

It starts with a pre-application in which the basic project is described and "narrative" outlining generally the development plans for the entire town for the next three years. The

pre-application runs about 11 pages.

This is then sent to HUD, which must approve it, then invite the town to make out a full application. Chelmsford's pre-application asked for \$40,000, but HUD only approved \$25,000. It meant re-thinking the plans a little. For instance, all new siding for the schoolhouse had to go. It also means landscaping of the grounds had to be scrapped. The effect, however, was not entirely detrimental, because it will give the senior citizens themselves a chance to take part in some of the repairs.

"**IT WILL MAKE** them feel it's theirs," if they participate, Flynn said.

Next comes the final application, in which the existing situation in town, as well as future plans must be outlined in detail.

"It gets pretty involved," says Flynn. "You have to break down census information," such as income levels, population density and how much middle and low income housing exists in the town.

The application must also include "everything you're going to do for the next three years and how the project fits into the total plan."

Basically, it's a more detailed version of the pre-application. In it, other projects, many having little direct connection with the project being applied for, such as sidewalk and sewerage programs.

You have to tell them everything you're going to do for the next three years. Flynn said "and how your project fits into that." The idea is to get applicants to think about the future so they don't go about things haphazardly.

THE SUN  
Lowell, Mass.



# The Suburbs

**Billerica Chelmsford Dracut  
Tewksbury Tyngsboro**

Tuesday, Oct. 26, 1976 —

## Senior citizen center funded in Chelmsford

CHELMSFORD—A \$44,000 federal grant to establish a senior citizen drop-in center in Chelmsford has been approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The drop-in center will be located in an abandoned town-owned building on Mill Road.

Health clinics, dietary workshops, arts and crafts and cooking facilities will be part of the center, but it also will be a place for informal social gatherings and regular events.

The approval came after a two-year effort by Town Planner Robert W. Flynn and the board of selectmen to obtain funding for the

project under the Community Development Act of 1974.

Before the senior center opens, the town must return a variety of paperwork required by the federal agency and complete an environmental assessment. A preliminary timetable calls for completion of the engineering phase of the project by early spring, Flynn said. July, 1977, is the tentative opening date.

The Council on Aging now uses the first floor of the town-owned Emerson House on North Road for its meetings.

The Lowell Sun Sept 6, 1977

## Senior center bids before board tonight

CHELMSFORD — The selectmen will formally open bids for reconstruction of a former one-room schoolhouse as the town's first senior citizen drop-in center at their meeting tonight.

A modern addition and renovation of the interior of the abandoned and vandalized Mill Road building, which once served as the original South Row School, are among

the plans for the senior center.

The town has received a grant from the federal Housing and Urban Development agency for the work.

Once it is completed, activities now held in temporary quarters at the Emerson House on North Road will move to the new facility.

## Senior center completion before deadline pushed

CHELMSFORD — The town is trying to get work on the senior citizen center on Mill Road finished before the federal agency that financed it cuts off funding.

In a letter from the community planning and development division of the Housing and Urban Development agency, spokesman James Pfeiffer reminded the town recently that the extension granted last month was its second for the \$44,000 project.

The original completion date of the project, funded through the only federal grant received by the town last year, passed in October.

Pfeiffer indicated that the extension would be permitted because the person responsible for its direction, Town Planner Kenneth Carney, had resigned and other reasons for the delay were explained.

The current deadline is Feb. 28, and the agency has urged the town to meet it.

SELECTMAN Arnold Lovering said last night he isn't certain it will be. "I'm a layman," he said, "but I would guess the facility would not be finished by that time."

However, Town Aide Kathy Robinson replied that work on the former one-room

schoolhouse is farther along than it looks from the outside. The interior walls and basic plumbing have been installed, she said, and the addition to the building is near completion.

The council on aging plans to apply for a grant of about \$3,000 to furnish the building

once it is completed. The selectmen endorsed the application to the state council on elder affairs last night.

The building will be a drop-in center and site of special activities planned for the elderly. The council on aging is temporarily quartered in the Emerson House on North Road.

The Lowell Sun June 19, 1978



### **The senior set**

...was represented on Mill Road this past weekend when the first activity center for the town's elder citizens officially

opened with a reception. Presiding at the opening of the senior citizen center, a renovated one-room

schoolhouse, was Selectmen Chairman William Murphy, shown at far left.





**CMFD-CUTTING THE RIBBON** at the Senior Citizens' Drop-In Center on Mill Road on Saturday afternoon, June 17, was Bill Marson of the Building Committee. At left, William R. Murphy, chairman of the Selectmen, looks on and at right (L-R) are three other members of the Building Committee: Kathy Robinson, Town Aide; Louise Bishop, chairman of the Council on Aging; and Miss Gula Boyce, member of the Council on Aging. Another committee member, Edward H. Hood, died recently. The Center will be open from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, so that senior citizens may use it to read, play cards or Bingo, see movies, etc. (Photo by Tec Art Photography)

## Open House Held At New Sr. Citizen Drop In Center

CMFD-On Saturday, June 17, an Open House was held at Chelmsford's new Senior Citizen Drop In Center, located at 15 Mill Road. Many senior citizens and Town officials were in attendance as Chairman William Murphy, Board of Selectmen officially raised the flag. A ceremonious ribbon cutting was also performed by Mr. and William Marson of the building committee. Delicious refreshments were served throughout the afternoon, as guests explored the new facility.

Formerly the Old South Row Schoolhouse, the newly renovated building includes a fully equipped

kitchen, a large meeting room and a sun room and will offer card games, bingo, cribbage, arts and crafts activities as well as health programs. The facility can accommodate approximately 70 people and is completely accessible to the handicapped.

The Center will be open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. for all senior citizens to enjoy. Offices for the Council on Aging and Town Aide as well as the Nurse's office are located within the building, offering assistance to senior citizens. Blood pressure clinics will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Center and other special activities are now being planned for the summer. The Council invites any senior citizen to 'drop in' and visit Chelmsford's new Center.



**CMFD-EXTERIOR OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS DROP-IN CENTER** shows the addition called the Sun Room which provides library as well as game facilities. Parking is available at right of photo, near entrance to the building. A patio is planned, with additional landscaping, in front of the Sun Room windows. The Chelmsford JC's have led in offering help with the patio. (Photo by Tec Art Photography)



The Lowell Sun June 14, 1976

**OLD SOUTH ROW SCHOOL HOUSE**