

FORM B - BUILDING SURVEY

38

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

1. Is this building historically significant to
Town Commonwealth Nation

Building has historical connection with the following themes: (see also reverse side)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Scholar | Commerce/industry |
| <u>Agriculture</u> | Science/invention |
| Art/Sculpture | Travel/communication |
| Education | Military Affairs |
| Government | Religion/philosophy |
| Literature | Indians |
| Music | Other _____ |

Development of town/city
Architectural reason for inventorying:

2. Town Chelmsford

Street address 11 North Road

Name J.P. Emerson House

Use original & present Residence - farm

Present owner Theodore Emerson

Open to public _____

Date _____ Style Post-Colonial

Source of date _____

Architect _____

OR part of Area # _____

CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added ell-rear

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material granite

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard-lapped+butted Brick Stone Other _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard _____
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork dormer over front door, dormer in middle of rear roof immediately beside ell roof.

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 1/2 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed rear

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 beside ell PORTICO _____ Balcony _____

FACADE: Gable end: Front/side Ornament _____

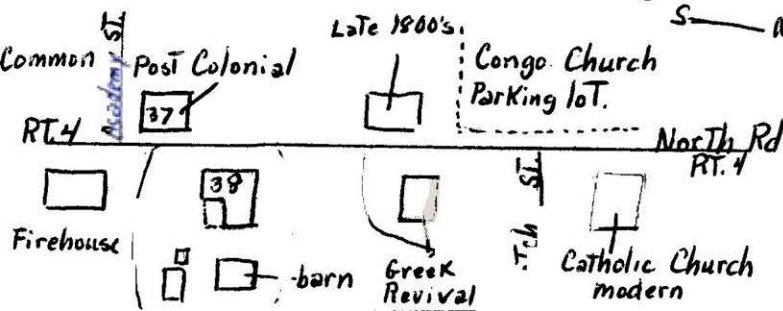
Entrance: Side Front Center Side Details: single door new ca 1925 - see attached sheet

Windows: Spacing: Regular Irregular Identical Varied see attached sheet

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards wooden, projecting

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street 45
Property has 124 feet frontage on street



Recorder Jane W Drury

For Chelmsford Historical Commission

Photo # 4-11 Date 9/20/72

SEE REVERS SIDE

RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

- 1. Outbuildings Large barn, Tack shop (originally shed), hen houses.
- 2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal
 Predominant features granite post & white painted wood fence in fair condition beside driveway;
 Landscape architect pond behind barn
- 3. Neighboring Structures
 Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.
 Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern Post-Colonial, 1800's
 Use: Residential Commercial Religious Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

Little is known about the early history prior to ¹⁸⁶⁹ ~~around the Civil War~~, when it was purchased by James Pitts Emerson, except that it is quite old and has been greatly altered. J.P. Emerson was grandfather of the present owner. ^{approx.}

IT is the one remaining working farm right in the center of Chelmsford. IT cannot be sold and remain a farm.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

Theodore Emerson, owner.
 Deeds: Middlesex District (North)
 Book 66, pg. 274
 Book 30, pg. 549
 Book 23, pg. 416

RESTRICTIONS _____

Original Owner: _____
 Deed Information: Book Number _____ Page _____, _____ Registry of Deeds

James P. Emerson House #38
11 North Road

Information to be added to the form submitted 1/30/73

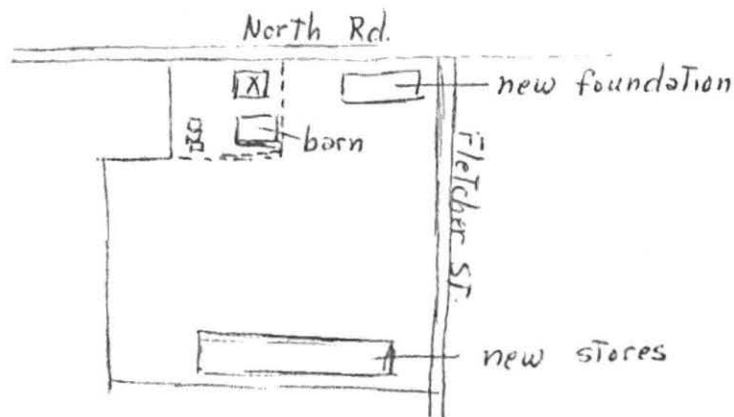
Date & History:

Deeds for the house have been traced back to 1836, when Stephen Pierce, a blacksmith, obtained a \$1000 mortgage on the land and building. Four years later he sold the land and buildings (including an added blacksmith shop) to Hildreth P. Dutton, a butcher. In a notice of public sale dated March 6, 1860, following the death of Mr. Dutton, the property is described: "a good two story house in good repair with an L a story and half high, Barn, Slaughterhouse, with three acres of excellent land, on which a sufficient supply of excellent fruit is usually obtained for a Families use or more. This is considered one of the pleasantest locations in the village....."

Fletcher Street was not laid out and accepted as a town way until 3/8/1894.

Neighboring Structures:

The owner's son is building a shopping center which eventually will cover all the land in back of the house up to the back of the barn, and between the house & barn and Fletcher Street. Two stores at the extreme rear of the lot were opened at Christmas-time (1973). The two twin Greek revival houses at the corner of North Road and Fletcher Street have been demolished and replaced by store foundations.



Bibliography and/or Reference:

Deeds, Middlesex North District
Book 14, pg. 94
Book 14, pg. 490

Middlesex Probate Dockets
#31026 Hildreth P. Dutton
#40390 Elijah Richardson
Chelmsford Book of Roads (original) - pg. 194 (J.M. Fletcher Road)

Date: Built before 1846

The dates that this house and the house at 1-3 North Road (#36) were built are not known. The house at 11 North Road is mentioned in a deed of 1846 (book 16, page 101), and the "double cottage house" at 1-3 North Road is specifically mentioned in a mortgage deed of 1848 (Book 16, page 421). Earlier deeds for these properties (1840 sale of both properties, and an 1836 \$1000 mortgage on 11 North Road) mention only "buildings" and a blacksmith shop, the latter being at the rear of 1-3 North Road.

In 1811 and 1813 Stephen Pierce, 3rd (later Jr.) bought the land for the two properties from William B. Fletcher and the estate of Samuel Pitts for a total of \$353.81. No buildings were mentioned. Assessors' records seem to indicate that one of the two houses and the blacksmith shop were standing by 1824 and that the second house was built after 1836. Construction of the two houses suggests that 1-3 North Road is the older; however, 11 North Road contains corner-posts (rough hewn but now boxed over), arched chimney base, and wide floor boards (removed ca 1925) and some lapped clapboards. Albert H. Davis, who came to Chelmsford with his parents in 1860, and eventually lived in 1-3 North Road, was told by his mother that 1-3 North Road house was built after the one at 11 North Road. ^{IT IS SAID THAT}

In 1840 the 1-3 North Road property sold for \$260, in 1848 for \$900, and in 1864 for \$900, which suggests that the house was built between 1840 and 1848 by Joseph Reed. If so, the house at 11 North Road would be the older one, perhaps built following the second marriage of Stephen Pierce in 1831.

Historical Significance:

Stephen Pierce was a blacksmith and built his shop at the rear of 1-3 North Road sometime between 1813 and 1824. This shop was moved to Fletcher Street about 1922 or 3 (recently torn down) It was replaced about that time by the present 2 story shop. Stephen married first Abigail Bateman in 1814, who died after bearing four children. He married second in 1831 Mary Corey, and they had at least five children. In 1840 he sold 11 North Road to Hildreth P. Dutton, a butcher. In a notice of public sale to Elijah Richardson dated March 6, 1860, following the death of Mr. Dutton, the property is described: "a good two story house in good repair with an L a story and half high, Barn, Slaughterhouse, with three acres of excellent land, on which a sufficient supply of excellent fruit is usually obtained for a Families use or more. This is considered one of the pleasantest locations in the village." It remained in the Richardson family for only nine years before Alvah, son of Elijah and a Civil War veteran, sold it to James P. Emerson in 1869.

A Civil War veteran, James Emerson established an express business between Chelmsford and Lowell, a successful occupation until forced out by the railroad. He then went into farming and trading. He and his son Ralph moved several houses, and he was the first of four generations of auctioneers. The property is still owned by the Emerson family and is the last of the active farms in Chelmsford Center.

James P. Emerson House
11 North Road

Compiled by J. Drury
10/10/73

Chelmsford Assessor's Office:

1973 owner: Theodore Emerson. Home lot. 3.21 acres.

1937 owner: Theodore Emerson. 3 acres.

Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds

North: Book 66, pg. 274	4/ 6/1869	Alvah Richardson to James Emerson. 4 acres. \$2000.
North: Book 34, pg. 448	5/25/1863	Elizabeth Richardson, widow, to Alvah H. Richardson (her son) 4 acres. \$50.
North: Book 34, pg. 447	5/ 6/1863	Estate of Elijah Richardson to Alvah H. Richardson. Public auction. 4 acres. \$148.
North: Book 30, pg. 549	4/19/1862	Elijah Richardson to Alvah H. Richardson (his son) 3½ acres. \$570.
North: Book 23, pg. 416	4/ 6/1860	Estate of Hildreth P. Dutton, butcher to Elijah Richardson. Public auction 3 acres. \$1455 plus \$700 mortgage
North: Book 14, pg. 490 South: Book 400, pg. 17	11/10/1840	Stephen Pierce, blacksmith, to Hildreth P. Dutton, butcher 3 acres. \$230 plus mortgage.
North: Book 14, pg. 94 South: Book 359, pg. 424	12/10/1836	Stephen Pierce, blacksmith, to Benjamin Chamberlain, Lowell. MORTGAGE, \$1000. 3 acres
North: Book 8, pg. 302 South: Book 204, pg. 157	4/1 1/1813	Samuel Pitts Esq ^r to Stephen Pierce, Jr. blacksmith 2 acres and 57 rods \$306.31 mowing & orcharding
North: Book 9, pg. 507 South: Book 195, pg. 167	7/ 2/1811	William Fletcher, yeoman to Stephen Pierce 3 ^d blacksmith ¼ acre \$47.50

Chelmsford Eagle

Dec. 12, 1877 - J. P. Emerson: teaming, moving, etc. Orders left with the station agent.

Lowell Weekly Journal

March 8, 1889 - A pleasant family reunion took place Monday at the house of Mr. James P. Emerson, the day being his birth day anniversary. From other places there were present Mr. & Mrs. Burt Emerson, Bay View; Mr. & Mrs. Rufus W. Emerson, Boxford; Mr. & Mrs. Henry H. Emerson, Needham; with several of the younger generation, in all a joyous company of 14.

July 31, 1891 - Wednesday afternoon Ralph W. Emerson, son of Mr. James P. Emerson, while shooting at a mark with a revolver, accidentally discharged a bullet into his left hand, the ball entering the palm of the hand and taking a course in the direction of the wrist. Ralph was taken to the office of Dr. Irish who, with Dr. Howard, probed for the ball but without success. It was then deemed advisable to make no attempt to extract the ball for two or three days as by that time its location might be more positively located. Thus far the lad has experienced but little pain.

Oct 6, 1893 - One of the saddest events that ever occurred in this village, inexpressibly shocking the community, and placing one of its best known families under the shadow of a most grievous affliction, took place Monday morning at 7 o'clock. James A. Emerson, second son of Mrs. James P. Emerson, and a young man about 19 years of age, was found dead in a room over his father's stable office, shot through the heart with a ball from his revolver, the work apparently from his own hand. Young Emerson had been for a year or more employed as a clerk in the grocery store of Caleb L. Smith at 199 Middlesex street in Lowell and Sunday evening returned with his older brother, Harry B., from a very enjoyable week's vacation. Monday morning he arose as usual, and, before breakfast, assisted his father and brothers, as was his wont, in the care of the horses and cattle at the barn, expecting, as his parents supposed, to take the 7:15 train for the city. As he did not answer when summoned to breakfast, search was made, and his brother Harry, upon going up the stairs where the body was found, discovered James lying upon his back upon a lounge, fully dressed, not even his cap removed, his hands clasped across his body and a revolver upon the floor by his side. His father, who followed the brother, spoke to James, thinking that he had lain down and fallen asleep, but no response came, and the painful truth was soon revealed that it was the sleep that knows no waking to earthly scenes. Dr. Chamberlain was speedily called and an examination showed that the ball passed directly through the heart, causing instantaneous death. Medical examiner Irish, was summoned, and after an examination, pronounced the cause of death suicide by pistol shot through the heart.

So far as known at this time there was no adequate motive to prompt the commission of the fatal deed. Of excellent habits and reputation, popular with all his acquaintances, the most pleasant home surroundings, and the idol of his parents, there seemed in this case everything to make existence a pleasure and a bright promise rather than a burden too heavy to be borne. The only reason that has been suggested itself to the family to account for the fatal step, and this seems wholly inadequate, is that a request for an increase of compensation had been refused at present on account of the depression in business, and that in a moment of despondency the end was sought. In their great bereavement the family have the unmeasured sympathy of their large circle of friends and acquaintances.

6 - Since the first account of the writer of the circumstances attending lamented death of young James A. Emerson, which statement was based

upon all the facts then known to the family, a later and more careful examination by the family physician and others gives strong grounds for believing that the sad fatality was the result of accident rather than premeditation, as was at first supposed. Concisely stated the prominent reasons for this conclusion are the following: Entire absence of motive as shown by the most careful inquiry; his home and business relations were of the most pleasant character. Upon the morning of his death, and but a brief time prior thereto, he was performing his usual morning duties and conversed with his mother regarding his apparel to be worn as usher at a wedding to take place the same week. There was no change from his usual demeanor that fatal morning. An examination of the body by the physician revealed an abrasion of the skin above the bullet wound, and which not have been caused by the discharge of the bullet. One theory is that in descending a ladder which led to the windmill, the machinery of which he probably had been oiling, as shown by the can in the room where he was found, he may have slipped, striking the pistol in his side pocket against his body, at the same time discharging it, and as the course of the ball indicates that only the lower part of the heart was struck, he probably retained consciousness sufficiently long to enable him to ~~seek~~^{reach} the lounge, which he would naturally seek. The position in which he was found was that which he invariably took upon retiring, and in his last moments he may involuntarily have assumed it. The course of the bullet also shows that had young Emerson intentionally discharged the pistol against himself he must have taken a most constrained and improbable position to do so. These and other reasons corroborative of the theory, have led those who have carefully investigated the subject to the conclusion that the fatal wound was not the deliberate attempt to take life but a most deplorable accident.

Lowell Daily Courier

July 2, 1903

Chelmsford

Mr. James P. Emerson is gaining although he has not yet left his bed. The effect of such a severe contact with Mother Earth necessarily must linger for some time. A letter to the writer from Mr. Livermore, who was in charge of the automobile which caused the accident...says "Your account was correct except that we had stopped the machine at the side of the road. We did not try to pass Mr. Emerson but were at a standstill with the power shut off and were waiting for him to drive by. The horse took a few steps toward us and then made a sharp turn to the left and went back towards the town. It looked to me as though he gave the horse loose rein and thought it would go by without much trouble, and when the animal turned quickly, he did not have it under control."

July 3, 1903 - James P. Emerson continues to improve steadily from the results of his recent accident.

August 17, 1903

G. A. R. THERE

Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Hosts

A Brilliant Lawn Party in Chelmsford Centre

There has been no handsomer hospitality in Chelmsford Centre or Lowell this summer than the G.A.R. lawn party held at the residence of Mr. & Mrs. James P. Emerson in Chelmsford Centre Saturday afternoon and evening, there being present Ladd & Whitney Circle No. 8, Ladies of the G.A.R. with comrades of Post 185 and the Sons of Veterans and the Ladies Aid of the Sons of Veterans of Lowell.

The spacious lawn was artistically decorated with foliage and flowers, and the large American flag, which guarded the front entrance, waved a welcome to the guests upon arrival. All were royally entertained on the lawn with various games and a good social time in general. The house and grounds were illuminated after supper, then instrumental and vocal music was enjoyed till the culmination of the event, when the good night greetings and cheers to the genial host and hostess were sounded until the last guest had gone.

March 23, 1908

Article XII: Relating to the establishment of more playgrounds for the schools in the Centre, was explained by H.E. Ellis, who said that the pupils had not adequate playgrounds except the town common. In view of the fact that the common could not be kept in proper condition as long as it was used as a playground, Mr. Ellis thought that some other place should be provided. He believed the property owned by James P. Emerson, next to the town hall be purchased. Walter Perham moved the the matter be left to the school committee. J. Adams Bartlett said it was a question of a few years before a new school is built. The motion of Mr. Perham passed.

Article XXIV: "at the request of Frank E. Putnam and others, to see what action the town will take in regard to naming the square formed by the junction of Centre and Parkhurst streets," was read, and it was voted to call it McLarney Square.

Lowell Courier - Citizen

Nov. 12, 1912 - Mr. Burt Emerson, for the past 42 years a resident of Gloucester, has returned to Chelmsford, his native place, to make his future home. For a number of years while at Gloucester, he was connected with the Cape Ann Granite Co., as paymaster and time keeper. Until their new home on Fletcher street is ready for occupancy, Mr. & Mrs. Emerson are staying at the home of his brother, James P. Emerson on the North road.

Sept. 25, 1913 - Considerable trouble has been experienced of late among local poultry owners from hen thieves, and tonight about 6:30, a man was discovered hurriedly leaving the hen houses of J. P. Emerson in North street. Chase was immediately given, but the man escaped in the darkness. He carried with him hens in either hand, and at the open door of one of the hen houses was found a hen with its legs tied with a tarred rope, probably overlooked by the thief in his haste to get away. A commotion at the hen houses of Napoleon Manseau on Wednesday night, led to an immediate investigation, and while it was evident that undesirable visitors had been about, no hens were missing.

March 21, 1916 - "Teddy" Emerson is suffering from an attack of blood poisoning affecting his right hand. The trouble developed from a cut received some time which had apparently healed safely. An operation was found necessary.

Conversation with Margaret & Enslie Mills, 12 Westford St., 12/4/1976:

The picture of the Emerson House and barn at 11 North Rd, in possession of the Historical Commission:

The barn shown in the picture was either added to or demolished and replaced.

The added to or rebuilt barn burned just before 1950 (late 40s) and was rebuilt by Ted Emerson.

That barn - demolished by Town of Chelmsford, 1976.

In old picture - man between the windows with hat in hand, is James P. Emerson.

F.A. Lane - lived on Littleton Road, about 9 houses down on the right.

Dan Haley - told Margaret Mills that he lived in the D. Perham house on Westford St. (see Beers Atlas). The house was later moved back to present Baptist Church parking lot and is now gone. Thought it might once have been part of the Stoddard estate.

Story re J. P. Emerson - confirmed by Evalyn & Ed. Russell:

J. P. Emerson always carried a large wad of money around with him, and would generously pull bills off of it when somebody needed some money. He carried it in his back pocket, including on the day he was plowing his garden in back of the barn at 11 North Road. When he finished, the money was gone, and has never been found since.

Conversation with Brad Emerson, 30 Dalton Rd, 12/4/1976:

Cannot indentify the people in the old picture above mentioned (which he gave to Selectmen after his father's death, and selectmen gave to Historic Commission). The spotted horse or pony in the picture was "Bucky", who was part of the family. Brad indenifies the horse from "hearsay."

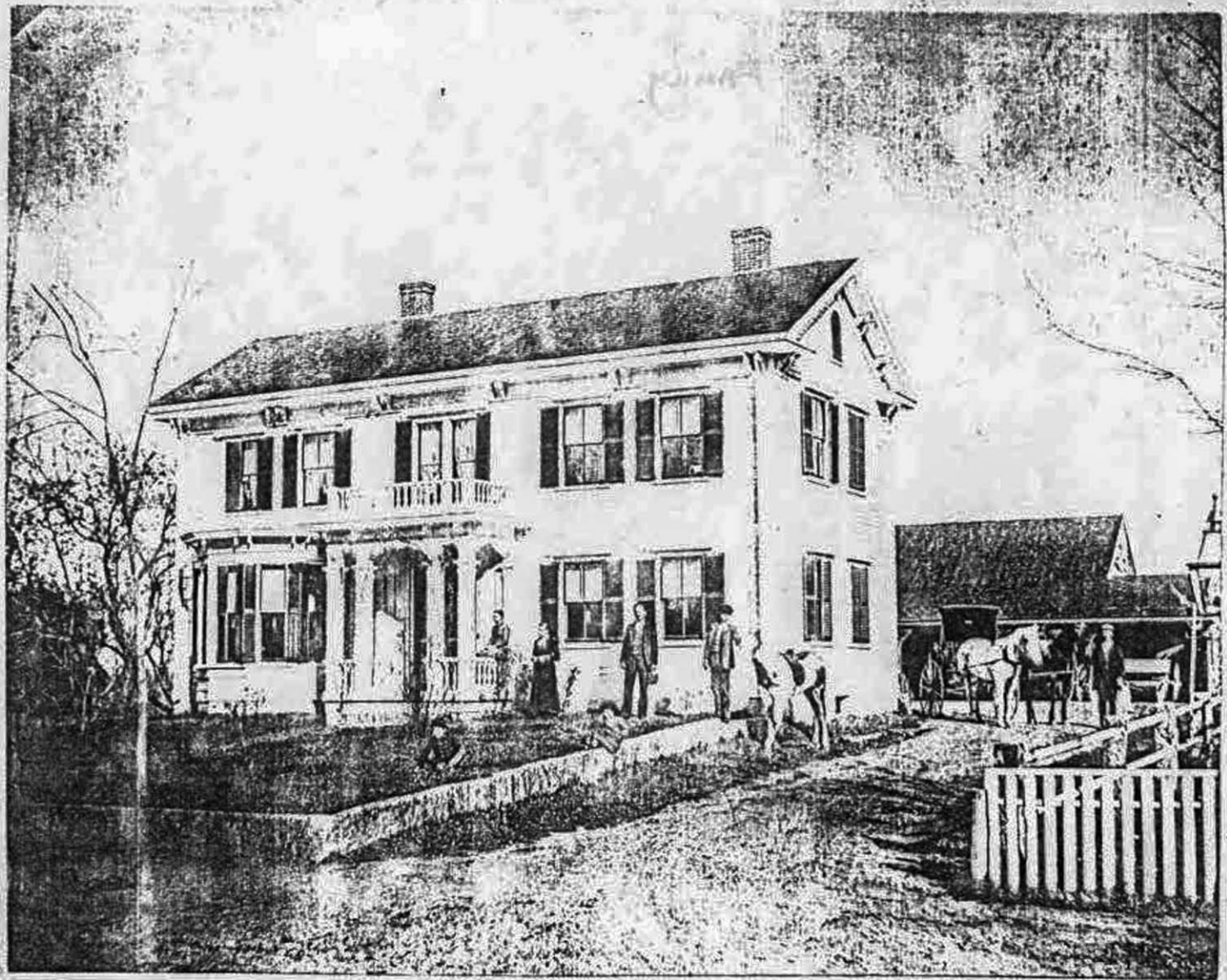
The picture most be at least 50 years old, by the style and condition of it.

Conversation with Eleanor Parkhurst, 51 Acton Rd., 12/4/1976:

Her grandmother was Hildreth P. Dutton's daughter, Martha Dutton Parkhurst. Hildreth P. had two wives: the first was ~~Martha-Jones~~ Martha Jones, whose mother was Elizabeth Jones Barrett of Concord. Hildreth P. and Martha Dutton had a daughter, Martha, Eleanor's grandmother. Martha Jones Dutton died, and Hildreth married second, the mother of Mary Ellen Dutton, who married a Laws. The Laws came from Asburnham. "Aunt Mary" told Eleanor about memories of watching a minister come over from the parsonage to the Winn House to perform a marriage. "Aunt Mary was watching from her home at 11 North Rd.

The Duttons came to Chelmsford from New Hampshire. They moved around a lot.

"Uncle Sam" Stevens Parkhurst boarded at 1-2 North Rd. when he ran the store.



EMERSON HOUSE.

Prior to 1910

J.P.Emerson House
11 North Rd.

Visit with Theodore Emerson, owner 9/15/72
By Jane Drury

"This house is one of the oldest in Chelmsford and is on its original site. I don't know who built it. James Pitts Emerson (my granfather) bought this place from somebody - can't remember whom. He also bought the Winn House from the Winns. This house is far older than the Winn House and was here long before James came into the picture.

James Pitts Emerson m. Addie Kittredge
↓
Ralph Waldo Emerson m. Mabel Fenderson
↓
Theodore Emerson m. 1st. Hester Lambert
2nd. Dorothy (widow)
↓
Bradford Emerson m. 1st. Joan
2nd. Linda (spring, 1972)

I don't know if Addie was related to Dr. Paul Kittredge.
The family dates back to Raph Waldo Emerson, the poet.

How my fater got his name: There was a big town celebration, of which the planting of the beech tree on the Common was a part. Babies were being Christened at the same time too, but after much discussion, James and Addie couldn't decide on their baby's name. The time for the christening came, and when the minister asked the parents for the baby's name, Addie piped up loud and clear, "Ralph Waldo Emerson." (Note by J. Drury: Ted was born in 1901, and the beech tree was planted in either 1894 or 1891, & it is doubtful that Ralph's christening could have been this late!)

Raph was the postmaster down in the Center for 16 years. Loved it, and it was about the only thing he knew how to do. So he was pretty crushed when the Republican administration went out, Woodrow Wilson came in, and Ralph lost his job. But he did all right for himself in the end.

Family of auctioneers: James Pitts Emerson, Ralph, Ted, Brad, and maybe even Brad's son Butch will follow.

How Brad started his auctioneering at a very early age: Ralph and Ted ran auctions on consignment when Brad was small. One day when still a little boy, Brad asked his granfather to sell 2 of his rabbits for him. Ralph said okay, but that Brad would have to do the auctioneering himself, which he did, first by announcing "Ones's a male and onés a female." Which is a pretty good thing to have if you want rabbits! Brad hoped to get 50¢ a piece but the audience liked the little boy so much that he got \$3! That started Brad's career, and from then on Ralph would often have Brad auction off the little items, figuring that the little boy would get more for them than he!"
(1 North Rd.)

Albert Davis (dead now) - lived in the Davis House (#36). Was an old man when he died (close to 100) but his mind was very sharp. His mother told him a lot about the Emerson House (11 North Rd.) and he told Ted. The Davis House was built long after this house. Albert was a farmer on Locke Rd. (Boulder Farm); he gave it up, built and ran a woodworking shop right by (in Back?) of the Davis House. Then he went back to the farm again and the shop was vacant. Ted's granfather (James Pitts Emerson) bought it and

moved it to Fletcher St., combining it with a barber shop (1 story building moved from next to R.R. tracks near Flanagan's paint shop - 1 Chelmsford St.-) to make the house at 20 Fletcher St.

Emerson owned houses on Fletcher St.:

14 & 16 Fletcher St. - 2 houses built by a Congo minister named Bartlett. J.P. Emerson bought them from Bartlett.

20 Fletcher St. - the barber and woodworking shops

22 Fletcher St. - was in the Center where Godin's is. J.P. Emerson moved it. Ted is 70 and can remember when it was moved. Family that was living in it didn't even get out during the moving.

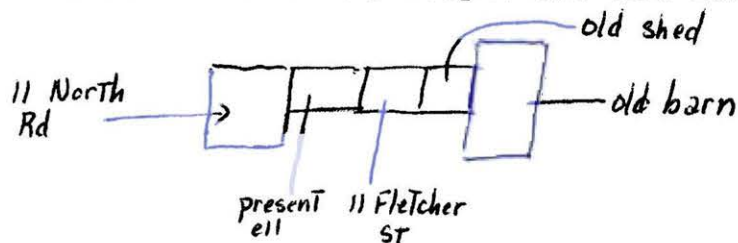
24 Fletcher St. - St. Mary's decided to build a new rectory. They wanted to build a new church but needed to get the old parsonage out of the way. A man named Jones offered the Father \$1000 for the rectory, and he would move the building and build a retaining wall. But he couldn't get a permit to move the building (town was up in arms, because it would mean chopping down elm trees to move it). Ted thought it over and decided that he could move the rectory without cutting down trees, moving wires, or cutting the house. He didn't pay \$1000 like Jones said he would: told the Father that he could get the Father out of trouble and get the house moved within the week. "But I'm not going to build any retaining wall or pay you \$1000." Father said, "I suppose you mean you'll give me a \$1 for it." "Right," says Ted, and he did. Moved the house to Fletcher St. and made it into 6 small apartments (mostly for 1 person).

23 Fletcher St. - across the street. Belongs to Raymond Greenwood.

J.P. Emerson moved it from Ted's present property. It was originally near Ted's present silo. It was a square silo. J.P. used it to store grain product from the Harvard Brewery to feed his cattle. When the brewery went out of business, he didn't need the silo anymore.

11 Fletcher St. - once Emerson owned and moved. House connected to Dr. Gruber's veterinary shop (new and was lengthened toward Fletcher St. summer of 1972). House was originally an ell attached to the present back ell at 11 North Rd.. Other end of it was attached to a shed, which was connected to the old barn (later burned - barn). Had no foundation under it. When one of Ted's sons was getting married (son helped Ted with the farm), the son needed a place to live. So, Ted moved the ell to Fletcher St, and made it into a house. People are now living in it, but not Gruber.

Jim,



11 North Rd.

This is one of the oldest house. It has been butchered terribly - gone through all the cycles of architecture to modern.

cellar: arches that held up the chimneys. Bricks were soft & dust away, pulverized from age. Still pretty much in the original form. Probably were brick ovens there once but torn out. Pieces of granite there (foundation) that ovens sat on.



THEODORE W. EMERSON

Theodore W. Emerson dies at 73

CHELMSFORD — Theodore W. Emerson, one of Chelmsford's most prominent residents, died unexpectedly yesterday afternoon at his home, 11 North Rd.

He was born in Chelmsford Oct. 5, 1901, the son of Ralph W. and Mabel (Fenderson) Emerson. He received his primary education in the Chelmsford schools and was graduated from Stockbridge-University of Massachusetts.

Mr. Emerson operated a Dairy Farm in addition to being a widely known auctioneer. He had been active in the affairs of the town, having served on the Board of Selectmen for two terms. He had been a member of the former Volunteer Fire Department, had served as a Director of the New England Milk Producers Association and had been Past Master of the Chelmsford Grange.

He was a member of the Unitarian church in Chelmsford, William North Lodge A.F. and A.M., and the Vesper Country Club.

His survivors include his wife, the former Dorothy C. Baldus, formerly of Winchester; two daughters, Mrs. Edward B. Smith (Martha) of Reading and Mrs. Lorren Pelletier (Linda) of Milford, N.H.; two sons, James P. Emerson of Pelham, N.H., and Bradford O. Emerson of Chelmsford; a sister, Mrs. Waldo L. Richardson (Priscilla) of Oak Ridge, Tenn.; six grandchildren, and a great grandchild.

Chelmsford Newsweekly

Chelmsford Newsweekly May 8, 1975

CHELMSFORD, MASS., FEBRUARY 20, 1975

PRICE 15c



THE EMERSON HOUSE at 11 North Road, adjacent to the Center Fire Station, has recently been put up for sale following the death of Former Selectman T.W. Emerson. Land associated with the house runs behind the fire station to the present Town Hall and has been eyed by several town departments but no serious consideration has apparently yet been given to the possibility of town acquisition of the property. Private interests are already considering purchase of the house and land, however, so town purchase seems remote unless immediate attention is given to the matter.

Emerson Land, East Fire Sta.

Approved

Chelmsford's Annual Town Meeting began Monday night, May 5, with approximately 350 voters attending. Declaring a quorum present (200 people) Town Moderator Daniel J. Coughlin called the meeting to order at 8 pm then proceeded to explain Town Meeting procedure.

The first controversial comments were heard during discussion of Article 13. This article, submitted by the Selectmen and recommended by the Fin-Comm, requested authorization for the Selectmen to acquire the land and buildings of the estate of the late Theodore W. Emerson a 3.21 acre parcel located at 11 North Rd. Outlining the Town's plans for the property Sel. Lovering told voters that acquiring the property would be a "small step forward" towards possible expansion of Town Hall. He described the severe space problems of present Town Hall with a "tremendous amount of people" trying to fit into limited space. Parking was also a big problem he pointed out. He indicated that should the Town agree to purchase the Emerson property

at this time nothing would be done for 10-12 months inasmuch as it was understood that the Emerson family could retain the house as their home for this period of time. Transition of the property would be geared for 10-12 months hence with the family bearing all taxes and other expenses until such a transition. The house would eventually be utilized as a Town Hall annex, he said, with the land providing additional parking facilities. FC Chairman, Marvin Schenk added that the property represented a good investment. \$100,000 was the price voters were asked to pay for purchase of the Emerson estate. Schenk said that the Town would never be able to get it "cheaper."

A question from one voter asking what the property was assessed at could not be answered at the moment but a question relative to zoning was answered with the information that the area is zoned for single family dwellings. Reginald Larkin asked what about possible purchase of the Middlesex County Training School? Of the two "iffy" proposals Larkin said he preferred the "iffy" possibility of acquiring the Training School. Lovering explained the problems

in communicating with County Commissioners and said that "it would be a very long time" before the County arrived at any resolution. Edward Hilliard and Deborah Heathcliff urged voters to determine how badly the Town needed the property before voting. Hilliard pointed out that the Town had acquired property on Pine Hill Rd. in addition to Roberts Field for the purpose of building a school but to date no schools had been built at either location. An oral vote left the Moderator "in doubt" and was followed by a hand count which showed that 181 voters favored purchasing the property while 167 opposed it.

Later in the evening Reginald Larkin asked for a reconsideration of the vote on Article 13 because "some people were not counted." His motion was defeated by a handcount of 150 for reconsideration, 187 opposed.

Departments move to Emerson House

By CAROL KOPP
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD—Several town departments are moving from Chelmsford Town Hall down the road to the old Emerson House in an interim solution until tentative plans for a new town hall are realized.

Within two weeks, the Youth Center and Town Planner Robert Flynn will move into new offices in the house, built in 1840 and sold to the town last year.

The Council on Aging will take over the first floor of the North Road home, also as an interim measure until the old Mill Road school is renovated for their use.

The Emerson property is the location where town officials are hoping to build a new town hall. It was purchased at the 1975 annual town meeting with the rationale that it could be the town's last opportunity to save prime Central Square land for town use.

A lengthy process of planning, seeking approval from officials and townspeople, and working out funding methods must be completed before construction actually begins. But Administrative Assistant Evelyn Haines said she hopes a new town hall will be ready within two years.

Haines is a member of the Emerson Property Development Committee, which produced a report to the board of selectmen that led to relocation of the offices.

EMPLOYEES AT the present town hall, and the board of selectmen, apparently are willing and eager to vacate.

On the second floor, small offices have been constructed around the sides of what was once the town meeting hall. Other offices are now located in the basement.

The heating system was designed for large open spaces. Now, the building inspector spends the winter in 120 degree heat while Haines keeps a portable heater around for her unheated office. Few offices can be kept at an ordinary temperature.

Another problem is a lack of space. The planning board has no office, and the personnel department shares one with the historic commission.

In the Emerson house, elderly residents of the town will have a meeting place in the living room, dining room and kitchen of the wood-frame home.

The Council on Aging also gets the Monkey Room. The room gets its name from its former occupant, who Haines met only once, when she discovered it hanging in a tree outside her window. The family pet has relocated in New Hampshire, and its room has been fumigated.

The committee appointed to study the property is now working on longer-range plans. Bids for demolition of the other buildings on the property have been advertised.

THE SUN
Lowell, Mass.



The Suburbs

**Billerica Chelmsford Dracut
Tewksbury Tyngsboro**

Monday, Sept. 20, 1976 — Page 13

THE HISTORIC District Commission is expected to rule tonight on a request for permission to tear down the buildings. Little opposition is expected to razing of the barn and storage sheds.

Permission to tear down the house itself will not be requested until plans for the new town hall are more complete.

The next annual town meeting agenda is expected to include a request for funds for an architectural design. The only rule now evident is that the new building will have to be "colonial" in appearance, a preference expressed by the selectmen at a recent meeting and considered necessary in the historic district.

The source of funding for construction is far from definite. A new federal Public Works Bill offered some hope, but it appears that civic buildings are a low priority on the funding list, Haines said. A request for appropriation of town funds is now more likely.

Eight issues to face voters in Chelmsford

CHELMSFORD—The selectmen have whittled down the number of articles on the warrant of the Dec. 1 special town meeting to about eight questions.

A tentative list of articles was submitted to the board last night by Administrative Assistant Evelyn Haines.

About a dozen of the proposed questions were cut from the list in a decision to postpone issues without immediate importance until next spring's annual town meeting.

The selectmen decided to put the most controversial articles last, ending the meeting with a request for approval of the next step in plans for a \$47 million town-wide sewer program, to be submitted for 90 per cent funding to state and federal environmental agencies.

NEXT TO LAST is an article submitted by the planning board concerning a zoning variance for the DeMoulas Shopping Center on Chelmsford Street.

The local chapter of the League of Women Voters is working with Building Inspector Peter J. McHugh on a zoning bylaw for political signs in the town.

Also to be submitted to the voters is a "project list" of potential town applications under the new federal Public Works Employment Act.

Another possible request to townspeople is a transfer of \$10,000 from available funds to begin plans and specifications for a proposed new town hall on the North Road site of the Emerson Property, now owned by the town and used for several municipal offices.

Other articles still remaining on the tentative town meeting warrant include a transfer of \$1,450 to correct a mistaken assessment; a transfer from one cemetery commission fund to another and a transfer of \$93.80 to meet unpaid bills from previous years.

THE SUN
Lowell, Mass.



The Suburb

**Billerica Chelmsford Dr
Tewksbury Tyngsboro**

Tuesday, Nov. 9, 1976 — Page 14



EMERSON HOUSE
... potential buyer found

Sun Staff photo by Brew

Dentist would buy Emerson House

CHELMSFORD — As planning for the proposed move of town hall into the closed McFarlin School nears completion, the town has found a buyer for the Emerson Property, once a favored location for a new town hall and now the potential source of money to pay for the relocation.

Rodger Currie, a Chelmsford dentist and landowner, confirmed yesterday that he planned to buy the North Road property just off Central Square.

The proceeds from the sale of the Emerson parcel, purchased at town meeting three years ago, is expected to cover the costs of the proposed move to McFarlin.

Selectman Arnold Lovering, a strong supporter of the McFarlin proposal, said he expects the full board to vote on the McFarlin plan in advance of the annual town meeting.

Warrant articles this year will request permission to sell the Emerson property and use the proceeds to move all municipal offices out of the 19th century building on the common.

THIS WEEK, town special projects assistant David Ramsay submitted a completed list of the renovation work that would be needed to turn the old wing of the McFarlin School, the town's oldest former high school, into a town hall.

The total cost of the proposal is \$136,840. Lovering said the board was likely to whittle that figure down slightly, aiming toward the \$100,000 range.

Ramsay's report estimates that the entire moving process could be made in one week this summer, with the use of more than 2,000 packing boxes full of town records, books, files and other materials.

His three-page list of renovation work at the school includes removal of

blackboards, some plumbing fixtures and school lockers. A large meeting room would be created from two smaller

rooms, and 20 doors and 42 locks would be replaced.

The plan includes construction of four vaults for storage

of town records and bricking up the walls in that room for safety.

OUTSIDE DOORS and

broken windows would be replaced, floors sanded, walls painted and air conditioning installed. Burglar and smoke

alarm systems would be put in, as would fire extinguishers and a telephone system with intercom. Every room would be carpeted and new furniture would be bought, including a custom-made 19-foot table for the selectmen.

The cost would be financed by the sale of the Emerson, bought to reserve it as a possible town hall construction site and now used to house offices overflowing from the present building.

Dr. Currie sums up his proposal for the property as a way for the town "to end up with a park, maintained privately, and a piece of property that is back on the tax rolls."

His proposal needs approval from the planning board and the historic district commission. It needs two votes from town meeting, including approval of the sale and rezoning to a "commercial B" zone.

The plan includes restoration of the Emerson House, built in 1835 by a blacksmith, for use as office space. Currie wants to reconstruct a barn, complete with silo, that was torn down by the town to create more office space.

HE WOULD landscape the property surrounding the house and, with use of a small parcel in back of the Emerson, construct a parking lot that he said would not be visible from the road.

He also wants to clean up a small pond on the property, "so that kids could skate on it and ducks could swim in it, like they used to long ago."

Currie, also owner of the building that houses the Central Savings Bank and the professional office building nearby, said he has wanted since 1972 to make that area "a buffer zone" between the heavily developed commercial area of Chelmsford Street and Central Square, and the residential neighborhoods along North Road.

The final price of the property is still being negotiated.

Lowell Sun
March 23, 1978

Neighbors endorse Emerson House proposal

By CAROL KOPP
Sun Staff

CHELMSFORD — Eleven neighbors of the Emerson House last night registered approval of a proposal by L. Rodger Currie to buy the town-owned North Road property and turn it into a combination office site and park. No opposition was voiced at the planning board public hearing.

A town-wide decision on the plan can be expected at the annual town meeting that begins April 24, when voters will be asked to approve sale of the land they bought just three years ago, and a zoning change on the property from single residential "RA" to general commercial "CD".

The move by the selectmen to seek a buyer for the property was made when it

became evident that construction of a new town hall, the purpose for which the site was being reserved, is an unlikely prospect financially. At the same time, the McFarlin School became the favored site for a town hall, with renovation costs estimated at a more feasible \$100,000.

THUS, TOWN voters will be faced with a series of major interrelated decisions.

They will choose whether to shut down the present Chelmsford Town Hall, the town's municipal building since its construction in 1879 at a cost of \$7,000 in what was then called Centre Village, and is now Central Square.

The same article would authorize the transfer of town offices to the old wing of the McFarlin School, a structure that served as the town high school from early in this century until a few years ago, when it became an elementary school. The school committee has voted to shut it down and relinquish it to the selectmen's control.

The estimated \$100,000 cost of renovating the building and moving town offices the short distance to 50 Billerica Road would be financed by sale of the Emerson property, which had been the last working farm left in Chelmsford Center.

Two zoning articles would permit the change to a general commercial district on the Emerson parcel and a separate adjoining parcel.

THAT IS WHERE L. Rodger Currie comes in. The Chelmsford dentist and investor, owner of a professional building on North Road and the building that houses the Central Savings Bank, has presented his architect's drawings and proposal to, so far, the conservation commission, the selectmen, historic district commission and planning board. He has mailed out copies of it to every abutter and church in the neighborhood and last night, volunteered to present it to any interested resident or organization.

Currie's plan includes restoring the 140-year old farmhouse, now used for the overflow offices from town hall, and rebuilding the barn and silo, torn down by the town. Both areas are proposed as expanded office space for the savings bank.

The proposal includes the creation of a "Center Park," described by Currie as "an idyllic, well-landscaped and maintained park-like facility for the enjoyment of the people of Chelmsford." The park area will surround a small pond between the Emerson property and the Village Green condominiums. Now "a dirty bog," Currie said, the pond would be cleaned up.

ACCORDING TO Currie's estimate, if the proposal is completed property taxes assessed on it would amount to \$48,816 yearly. As town-owned land, it is currently tax-free.

CHELMSFORD

Town Meeting Ends; Emerson House Sold

CMFD-Over 450 voters, the largest number yet, attended Thursday night's (May 11) third and final session of Chelmsford's Annual Town Meeting. Seventeen articles of the regular town meeting were attended to as well as seven articles of a Special Town Meeting which was held within the regular session.

Drawing the crowd were several zoning articles of high interest. These dealt with the Emerson property on North Road, the Archer Appliance property on Billerica Rd. and the MacElroy property on Summer St. In each instance, the articles sought to change the residential zoning of these areas to zoning which would allow for more commercial activity.

The two Emerson property articles sailed through without

question, changing the North Rd. and Fletcher St. area around the property from Single Residence to General Commercial. Passage of related articles approved the sale of the Emerson property to Dr. Rodger L. Currie for the sum of \$120,775. and granted the Board of Selectmen permission to use the funds realized from the sale of the property for renovation of the McFarlin School building.

Dr. Currie plans to renovate the Emerson House and develop the land around it as a small public park for community use. The Board of Selectmen expect to be moving Town Hall offices into the McFarlin.

Articles 34, 35, and 36 related to the Emerson property. After Selectman Arnold J. Lovering and Dr. Rodger L. Currie explained Dr. Currie's plans for the development of the property, voters unanimously, and without question, approved rezoning of the area.

As proposed by Dr. Currie, the Emerson House will be renovated, a barn with silo will be reconstructed for use by the adjacent Central Savings Bank, and a pond on the property will be restored with the surrounding land made into a small, public park for community enjoyment. Dr.

Currie has agreed to a preservation restriction legally prohibiting any other use of the property in the future. The Planning Board, the Historic District Commission, the Finance Committee and the Conservation Commission all endorsed Dr. Currie's plans. After the positive vote, Dr. Currie expressed his deep appreciation for everyone's support. "The town has been very good to me and my family" he said "and I am deeply appreciative of this opportunity to do something for the town."

Article 37 was also easily approved, allowing the Board of Selectmen to use the funds realized from the sale of the Emerson property for renovation of the McFarlin School. It is anticipated that the Board will proceed to move Town Hall Offices to McFarlin sometime towards the end of summer. According to Selectman Lovering, renovation of the McFarlin could have cost much more but expenses were held to \$120,775.

Lovering further explained that the sale price of the Emerson property was arrived at by researching the highest rate of interest which would have been given the Town if the \$100,000 paid for the property in 1976 had been invested. One percent was added to this figure for a total of nine percent, he said, "so the Selectmen could in good conscience tell you that buying the property was the best investment that could have been made at that time."

The only questions asked about the proposed move were (1) "What is to be done with the old Town Hall building and (2) would there be provisions for the handicapped at the new facility? Lovering replied that as yet there are no definite plans for disposition of old Town Hall but the Board is considering developing it as a cultural center for the community. In answer to the second question, Lovering said that the handicapped would be provided for in the McFarlin renovation plans.

Emerson house sale soon to be finalized

CHELMSFORD — Inaugurating efforts to relocate town hall offices to the former McFarlin School on Billerica Road, selectmen are expected next week to finalize an agreement for the sale of the Emerson House.

Before completion, however, the document must pass muster before two town boards and town counsel.

The tentative purchase and sale agreement between the town and Dr. L. Rodger Currie, who plans to renovate it for offices, is up for review by the planning board and historical district commission.

Both groups previously endorsed the sale proposal at town meeting when a "preservation restriction" was included to guarantee no substantial design change would occur to the colonial-era farm house. It also insures the owner some leeway for future construction on the property.

Tied in to the move of town hall offices to the McFarlin School, the sale of the Emerson House property is expected to finance that relocation.

WHEN COMPLETED, the agreement will constitute the first step towards what is expected to begin physical mov-

ing of the offices to the Billerica Road building next spring.

The exact date of that spring-time move, under the plan developed by Selectman Arnold J. Lovering, won't be set until early next January. Among other things, his plan

also sets deadlines for the selection of an architect and search for state and federal funding of the move.

A \$120,000 price tag for the Emerson property sale and renovations creating the new town hall has been estimated by selectmen.

Lowell Sun

Sept. 28, 1978

CHELMSFORD

Plans For Emerson Farm Are Revealed

CMFD-Plans for the Emerson Farm on North Road are nearly ready for site plan review, according to reports from Paul Bienvenu, the engineer, and Ted Kelley, the architect for the project. At the regular meeting of the Planning Board, March 14, they and Dr. Currie showed plans and drawings of the proposed green areas, parking lots, and the pond.

Mr. Kelley explained that the present driveway from North Road to the Bank's parking lot will be closed and changed into a grassy area. A driveway would then be constructed between the Emerson House and the Fire Station. Behind the house and the Bank, the plans show two parking areas, several walkways, a large grassy park, and a retention pond of about 160 feet diameter.

Mr. Kelley also pointed out that a new building for drive-up tellers will be constructed; however, because the covenant states that no buildings should be erected unless they give the appearance of farm buildings, the drive-up tellers will be housed in a barn-like structure with a silo attached.

After explaining that extensive drainage plans must be done for the Conservation Commission, and complete lighting and layout plans must be done for the Historic District Commission, Mr. Bienvenu asked the Board members if they thought a thorough site plan review would also be necessary. As acting chairman, Mrs. Fenn suggested that copies of all the materials to be submitted to the other boards be sent to the Planning Board, and perhaps they would suffice.



11 North Road in distance to left of tree, 1976





