

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

35/104/4	Westford		CLM.400
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Town/City: Chelmsford

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

Photograph



Address: 6-8 School Street

Historic Name: John Whidden Store

Uses: Present: multiple-family dwelling

Original: mixed-use

Date of Construction: ca. 1882

Source: Deed research

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding/vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Ca. 1980 rear porch enclosure

Ca. 2000 replacement siding and windows

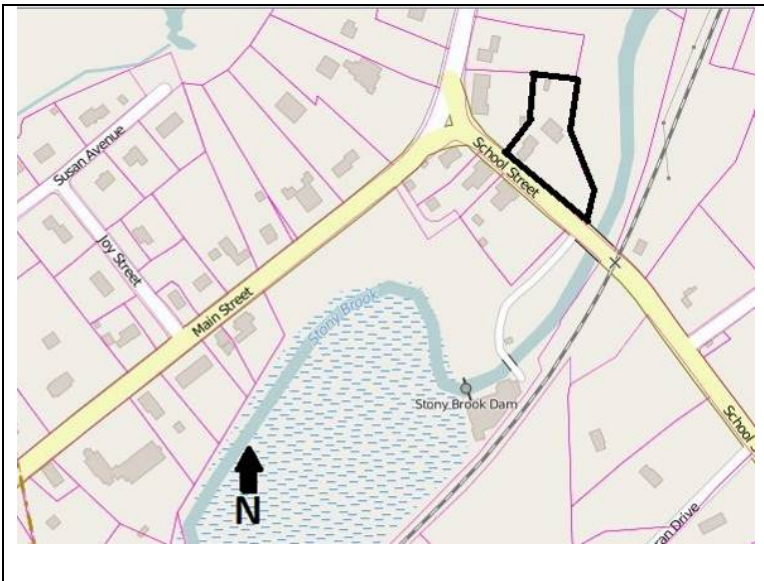
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .96 A

Setting: The building is located approximately 20' northeast of School St, south of Main St. An asphalt drive is to the north of the building that leads to a separate building behind this one. A metal fence is along the south half of the front of the lot. The surrounding area includes 19th and 20th c. residential, industrial, 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

6 SCHOOL 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.

This building is located on the east side of School Street, just south of Main Street. It is a ca. 1880, two-and-a-half story front-gable, wood frame building. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the exterior walls are covered with replacement vinyl siding with vinyl trim. The building sits atop a stone foundation. Fenestration consists of replacement, one-over-one, double-hung windows with those on the primary (southwest) façade featuring decorative shutters. The primary façade faces School Street. It is divided into three bays with the front entrance located in the first bay on the north side of the façade. A small porch roof, with Classical-inspired molding, surmounts the doorway. The gable induces gable returns, lending the building a hint of Greek Revival style architecture. The building includes a two-story rear wing that has a shallow, rear gable roof. A two-story, enclosed porch is located on the north wall of the wing. A secondary entrance into the building is on the first story of the porch.

A large barn is located behind the building. The barn appears on the 1889 map of West Chelmsford. Its current function appears to be a garage and/or storage space.

The building is an altered example of a late nineteenth century mixed-use building that retains historic integrity of location and setting.

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 1875 map of West Chelmsford, but is present on the 1889 map. Deed research traced the ownership history to 1882 when the Hiscox File Manufacturing Company sold the lot to John Whidden. The 1889 map shows that Whidden operated a store and post office at this location; therefore, the building was likely constructed once Whidden assumed ownership. Whidden (1843-1894) was appointed post master on January 5, 1886 for West Chelmsford, but he also served constable and cemetery commissioner for the village. Whidden was killed on August 8, 1894 while switching freight cars between the main and side tracks. Some time after Whidden's death the property passed to Clas Johnson. Johnson (born ca. 1865 in Sweden) appears to have married Whidden's daughter Sarah. In 1910 Johnson is listed living in Westford as a boarder of Lillian Whidden; he is listed as widower and granite quarryman at this date. In 1917 Johnson granted the property to George C. Moore, Sr. Moore was the proprietor of mills in North Chelmsford and owned water rights of the former Roby Manufacturing/Hiscox File Company site in West Chelmsford. After Moore's death the executors of his will sold the property in 1924 to Augusta Nystrom. The 1925 city directory lists Nystrom living with husband Carl, a derrick rigger, on School Street. The 1937 directory lists Nystrom, then widowed, continuing to reside on School Street. Nystrom died in 1940 and the property passed to her heirs. Her heirs, including Arthur Nystrom and Mildred Wilkins, sold the property in 1945 to Anthony and Marjorie Abreu. One year later the Abreu family sold the property to Verne and Eleanore Woodward. The 1948 city directory lists Verne working as a telephone operator and Eleanore as a housewife and residing at 8 School Street. After Eleanore's death in 2011, the co-ownership of the property passed to Linda and William Woodward.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Beers, F.W. *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*. J.B. Beers & Co., New York. 1875.

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

Geo. H. Walker & Co. *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Geo. H. Walker & Co., Boston, MA. 1889.

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

Middlesex North Registry of Deeds. www.lowelldeeds.com.

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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 West Chelmsford is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a locally significant historic district under Criterion A for the development of this area around the Roby Manufacturing Company and Chelmsford Woolen Mills as well as under Criterion C for its intact examples of mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century residential architecture. The boundary of the proposed district would include resources built during the period of significance along Main Street from approximately Loiselle Lane in the north to the Westford Town Line, as well as resources along School Street between Main Street and Graniteville Road. This building at 6 School Street would be a contributing resource to that district as an example of mixed-use architecture constructed during its period of significance that retains some historic integrity.