

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 brick house at 2 Farmers' Row is a front-gabled, 4x4-bay, Federal style design with rear additions set diagonal to the main block of the house
- * Decorative features include the nearly symmetrical fenestration in the façade, molded cornice, gable returns and classical trim with sidelights around the off-center entry
- * Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with granite lintels and sills; a granite lintel is above the front door as well
- * Secondary entries are in both diagonal ells and have simple trim; Two brick chimneys rise from the roof of the main block on either side of the ridge; A post and rail fence separates the house from the road
- * A detached barn is in the south side yard behind the house; The front gabled block is accessed through the street elevation by a rolling vehicle door; 6/6 double-hung sash flank the main door and a door to the mow exists above; a perpendicular ell projects from the north side of the barn and has a lower roofline than the main block; A detached garage from the mid 20th century exists in the north side yard
- * The setting is rural with extensive tracts of open land providing views from Farmers Row to the woods along the Nashua River to the west
- * The Asa Lawrence House is in excellent condition has a high quality of design and setting; this is one of several ornate estate properties on Farmers Row; another front-gabled Greek Revival style house exists at 31 Hollis Street

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

see continuation sheets

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 house was built for Asa Lawrence in 1837 just north of his previous house (since moved to Pleasant Street). Mr. Lawrence lived in the house until c. 1847 when valuations show he paid tax on property worth \$6,600, an amount above the average in Groton. Asa S. Lawrence, the son of Asa Sr., occupied the house by 1855 according to the state census which records him as a 34 year-old farmer married to Agnes with a child named William A. Lawrence. Census records also indicate the Lawrences lived with a female Irish immigrant working as a domestic servant, a common arrangement in town at the time. Non-population Census Schedules from 1850 show he owned 250 acres, a horse, 6 cows, 4 oxen in addition to a significant amount of agricultural produce. By 1860, he had 400 acres. Mr. Lawrence remained in the house until 1875 according to the atlas from that year and to tax records which list his property as 2 horses, 2 oxen, 14 steers, 30 cows, 600 lbs of swine, 2 barns, a cottage house, (possibly to house his employees), 2 additional farms, one of which may have been south of the south end of Common Street as shown on the 1875 atlas, and at least 243 acres of land, all of which amounts to a great deal more than what the typical Groton farmer owned. In June of 1875, the property came into the possession of Asa's relative and Abbott Lawrence's son James Lawrence as depicted on the 1889 Walker atlas. The resident directory from 1888 gives no occupation for him but tax information from 1889 states he owned a steam engine and machinery, (probably to run his creamery, a building worth \$3,000-more than most Groton houses), a large amount of money and stocks, 6 coach horses, 17 Guernsey cows and 7 grade cows (subdivisions of livestock unique to him in the tax records), and numerous additional houses including his residence next door at 44 Farmers Row (MHC #89), large parcels and several types of livestock, expensive furniture and carriages. While the 1939 WPA map does not depict the house as a farm, the land around was planted in hay and crops. The house was well known regionally for the creamery which functioned into the 20th century, managed from 1875-1915 by Myron Swallow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

see butler, 247; Dr. Green, Vol. 4, p. 431; Butler maps of 1832 and 1847; Walling map of 1856; Beers atlas of 1875; Walker atlas of 1889; 1939 WPA map; Boutwell, "Old Homesteads of Groton, Massachusetts"; Smith, Faith. "Farmers Row in Groton, Massachusetts: The Olmsted Firm's Influence on a Neighborhood from 1884-1894". Unpublished MS, 1999;

**** All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- 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
Groton

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Massachusetts Archives Building
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

2 Farmers Row



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community Groton

Property Address

2 Farmers Row

Massachusetts Archives Building

220 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)
X

Form No.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible X

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district X

Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of significance by: Sanford Johnson

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Greek Revival Style Asa Lawrence House at 2 Farmers Row is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The house was built for the farmer Asa S. Lawrence in 1837 just north of his previous house (since moved to Pleasant Street). Mr. Lawrence was the grandson of Captain Lawrence (d. 1804) who commanded one of Groton's two companies of minutemen on April 19th, 1775 and the Second Company at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Mr. Lawrence lived in the house until c. 1847 when valuations show he paid tax on property worth \$6,600, an amount above the average in Groton. Asa S. Lawrence, the son of Asa Sr., occupied the house by 1855 according to the state census information from that year. The building's associations with historic agricultural activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the house with its brick main block, gable front façade and off-center entry with classical trim are unusual in Greek Revival style residential construction in Groton making the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.