

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # 221 16 USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number 48

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)

Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2x5" black and white only) Label photo on back with town and property address. Record film roll and negative numbers here on form. Staple photo to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

Roll Negative(s)

Address 401 Old Ayer Road
Historic Name Sawtell House - Harriman Inn
Uses: Present Residential - Inn
Original Residential - agricultural
Date of Construction c. 1830
Source Butler's 1828-29 field notes

Style/Form Federal
Architect/Builder
Exterior Material:
Foundation Granite
Wall/Trim Wood clapboard
Roof Asphalt shingle
Outbuildings/secondary structure Attached garage

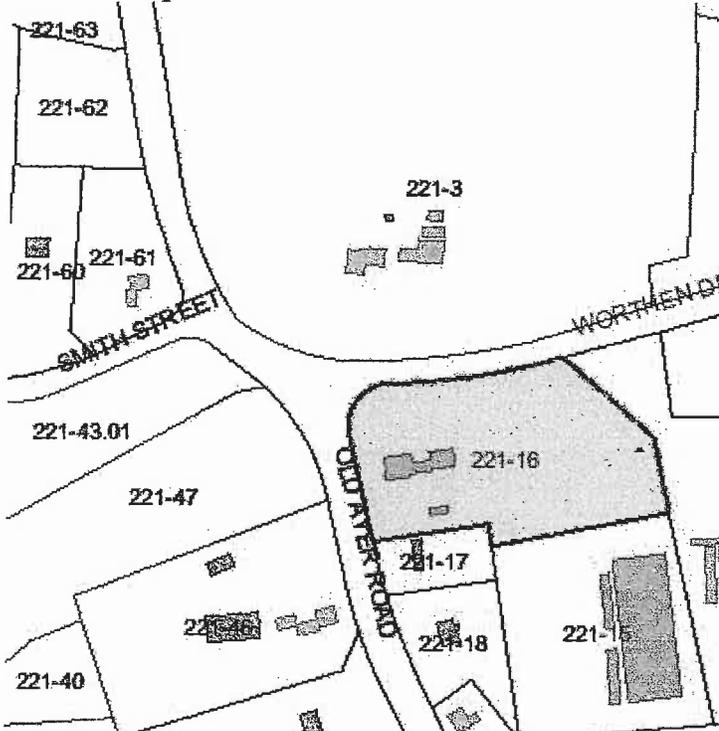
Major Alterations (with dates)
Restored, c. 1965, 2000

Condition Good
Moved no yes Date

Acreage 3.07
Setting Rural

Sketch Map

North Toward Top



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

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 core of the house at 401 Old Ayer Road is a Federal style, 2-story, 5x2-bay, ridge-hipped form that has been enlarged with two additions at the rear, the first of which matches the height and slope of the roof of the main block; the second addition is slightly lower but also rises to 2 stories; the southern elevation has a total of 8 bays; a modern garage of 2 bays is attached to the rear of this addition; additional secondary masses are the two entry porches on the south elevation; while both have hipped roofs, the westerly example is enclosed while the one to the east is open
- * Decorative features include the symmetrical façade fenestration, corner boards and molded cornice; tall brick chimneys rise from the 2 side slopes of the main hipped roof; 2 more chimneys exist in the additions
- * Windows are 66/6 double-hung sash with projecting beaded trim
- * The center entry has classical trim in the form of an entablature, pilasters and sidelights
- * The house is larger than most former farmhouses from the period due to enlargements made for use as an inn; the house is in excellent condition and the main Federal style block retains elements of the original design

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 property was originally owned by Matthias Farnsworth Sr. (died c. 1682), an original Groton proprietor and descendant of a Dorchester resident, although the current house does not appear to have been built until c. 1830. Mr. Farnsworth was directed by the town in 1670 to build a cart bridge over James Brook "beneath his own house". The bridge, a short distance north of the house and down the hill, facilitated travel to the earliest mills in Groton on sites, due to boundary changes, now located within the town of Harvard. Dr. Green states that Matthias Farnsworth Jr. (born c. 1680), a weaver and son of a weaver, was captured by Native Americans in either 1697 or 1704 and taken to Canada where he stayed and was baptized in 1706. From 1830-1856, the house was occupied by Ephraim Sawtell who was taxed in 1830 for ownership of \$1,900 of real property. The house is described in Butler's field notes in its current form and painted white. Mr. Sawtell is listed in 1855 census records as a 59-year-old yeoman with a wife named Zoa and two boarders, 9 and 10 years old. By 1865, the Sawtells were living here by themselves. From at least 1875-1883, Henry M. Gaunt was the owner and was taxed in 1875 for ownership of \$1,800 in real property as well as 2 horses, 5 cows, a house and 2 barns. The 1889 atlas depicts W. Stone as the owner. No one named W. Stone appears in the tax records or the 1888 resident directory, suggesting the possibility of an error on the map, but there are people named Levi W. Stone and Ward L. Stone, both farmers, who may have been the tenants. In 1894, Isaac Harriman bought the farm and with his family operated a boarding house here, possibly adding the rear ell for additional rooms around this time. Verne Harriman was listed as a farmer living at this location in the 1918 resident directory and a relative named Warren had joined him by 1929. The property is described as the Harriman Inn on the 1930 Groton map and labeled P. C. Harriman.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

Previous GHS research; 1875 Beers Atlas; 1832, 1847 Butler Maps and field notes; Resident Directories, 1888, 1918, 1929; Caleb Butler's history of Groton, p. 267, 40, 48, 49, 91, 222; F.M. Boutwell, pp. 3-4; Green Vol. 2, p. 364, 373-378; Tax records, 1830-1889; 1930 Groton map;

**** 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.

401 Old Ayer Road



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community Groton

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Property Address
401 Old Ayer Road

Area(s)

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

Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria considerations: A B C D E F G

The Federal Style house at 401 Old Ayer Road is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The property was originally owned by Matthias Farnsworth Sr. (died c. 1682), an original Groton proprietor and descendant of a Dorchester resident, although the current house does not appear to have been built until c. 1830. Mr. Farnsworth was directed by the town in 1670 to build a cart bridge over James Brook "beneath his own house". The bridge, a short distance north of the house, facilitated travel to the earliest mills in Groton on sites, due to boundary changes, now located within the town of Harvard. Dr. Green states that Matthias Farnsworth Jr. (born c. 1680), a weaver and son of a weaver, was captured by Native Americans in either 1697 or 1704 and taken to Canada where he stayed and was baptized in 1706. From 1830-1856, the house was occupied by Ephraim Sawtell who was taxed in 1830 for ownership of \$1,900 of real property. The house is described in Butler's field notes in its current form and painted white. Mr. Sawtell is listed in 1855 census records as a 59-year-old yeoman with a wife named Zoa and two boarders, 9 and 10 years old. The building's associations with military and agricultural activities establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the symmetrical façade, the surviving exterior materials and details make the property eligible under Criterion C. The house retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.