

## FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission

2-12

HUDSON

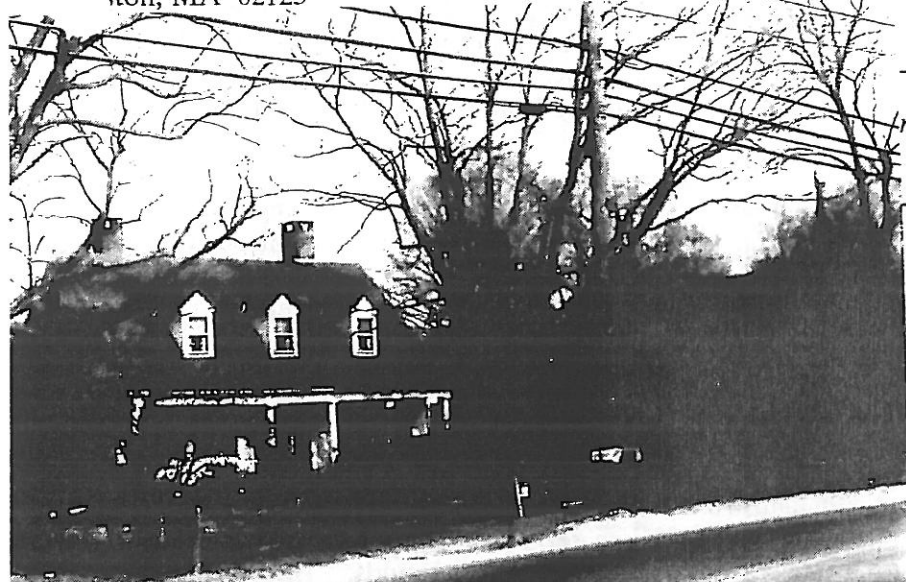
75, 396, 397

Massachusetts Archives Building

720 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, MA 02125

NRDIS: 1997



Bolton

(neighborhood or village)

Bolton Center

649 Main Street (Rte. 117)

Name Theodore Gardner House

Present dwelling

Original dwelling

Construction 1830-31

Whitcomb

Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

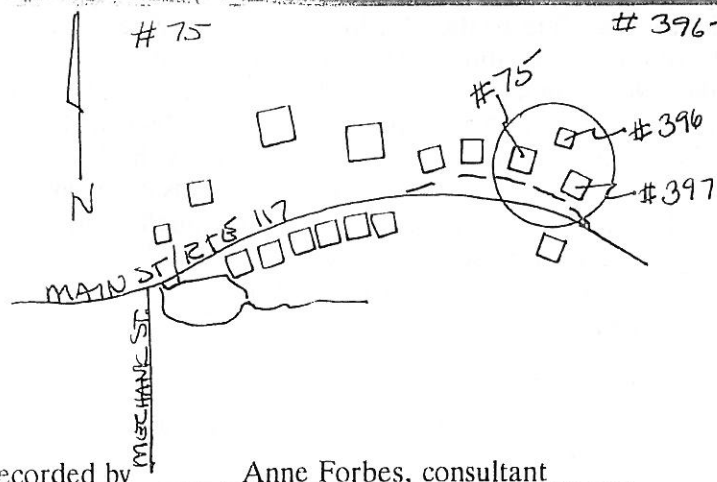
Foundation granite block

Trim wood clapboard and flushboard

asphalt shingle

Buildings/Secondary Structures

19th C. barn; garden shed, early-mid 20th C.



Major Alterations (with dates) none

Condition good

Moved [x]no [ ]yes Date N/A

Acreage 28.5 acres

Setting East part of residential/institutional town

center. Open fields and woods to rear. Fieldstone wall, post&amp; rail fences along road; several mature sugar maples remain at front.

Recorded by Anne Forbes, consultant

Organization Bolton Historical Commission

Date February, 2002

## 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 Theodore Gardner House is one of a pair of nearly identical modified Cape Cod houses that were built in 1830-31 at 649 and 655 Main Street. According to local sources, the frame of 649 Main is of oak, however, while the other is of pine. While the building is primarily Greek Revival in style, the pointed-arch windows under the peaks of the end gables (now covered with their louvered shutters) contribute a hint of the Gothic Revival to the house.

Both buildings are distinguished by their facade-width front porches, which are formed by the setting back of the plane of the facade. The roof thus overhangs the front wall by several feet, where its front edge is supported on four fluted Doric columns. A square-doweled balustrade spans the outer spaces between the columns. A pair of large brick chimneys rises from the outer ends of the roof ridge. A one-story ell, its roof ridge parallel to that of the main house, extends east from the rear northeast corner of the main block. A shallow leanto extends across the back of the ell. A second ell which projects to the rear from the center of the north wall of the house has a screened porch along the east side.

The 5-bay facade is clad in flushboard. The broad center entry is typical of the early years of the Greek Revival in its corner-block surround and full-length sidelights (now concealed or replaced by wood louvered shutters,) but the door, with a square light over horizontal panels, is a replacement of about 1900. The windows, here and in most of the rest of the house, are 6-over-6-sash, in molded surrounds. Three gabled dormers, each with a small 6/6 window, are evenly spaced across the front roof slope.

The west gable end has three windows at the first story, two at the upper half-story, and the single pointed-arched opening, covered by louvered shutters at the peak. The upper part of the east end has the same arrangement. At the first story, the south bay is occupied by a shed-roofed bay window, and a narrow, transomed doorway is located in the center.

The house reflects its construction date, at the transition from the Federal to the Greek Revival period, in the lack of a roof overhang at the gable ends. The narrow cornice is molded and boxed, the cornerboards are relative narrow, and a water table rings the base of the wall.

The northeast ell has a brick chimney behind the ridge, and a fieldstone foundation. The facade is three bays, with a narrow 6-panel door west of center, flanked by two 6/6 windows. A single 6/6 window is centered in the east gable end, with a tiny window behind it in the end of the leanto.

#### Outbuildings

The gable-front barn (#397) which stands east of the house may date to the Gardner period of ownership, or it may have been built by the Carpenters in the middle of the 19th century. One of only a handful of 19th-century barns left in Bolton center, this is a classic banked New England barn, probably three-aisle in plan. The south gable end has a large centered, vertical-board wagon door under a transom made up of five single 6-pane sashes. To either side of the door is a 6-pane window, but a full 6/6 sash window occupies the front gable peak. There are no windows along the west side, indicating that the west aisle of the barn was probably the haymow bay, while the cow tie-up was on the east. The east side of the building has four small 6-pane stanchion windows, and a vertical-board door located between the first two. The fieldstone ramp that rises to the side doorway suggests that this was a livestock exit from the tie-up bay. Although the barn is clapboarded, on both sides the exposed cellar story is sided with vertical boards. The eaves of the barn are unboxed; the cornerboards are narrow.

A small side-gabled garden shed (#396) or playhouse either dates to the mid-20th century, or may remain from one of the henneries that were listed in Assessor's records for the property by 1930. It has a symmetrical, 3-bay facade with a central 6-panel door and two small 6/6 windows with pierced, paneled shutters.

[\*] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.* \*part of Bolton Center NR Historic District, listed 1997

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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

Bolton Theodore Gardner House  
649 Main Street

Area(s)

Form No.  
75, 396, 397

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain 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.*

This large property was one of two on the north side of Main Street that were divided out of the large farm belonging to Stephen P. Gardner in 1830-31 for his grown children, Laurinda and Theodore, who both married members of the Withington family of Boston. Nearly identical houses were built for each of the children. 655 Main Street (see Form #77) was a small property for Laurinda Gardner and her husband George Withington. 649 Main, however, was a farm of at least 80 acres, which Gen. Gardner conveyed to his son, Theodore Gardner (1809-1895). Map evidence indicates that Stephen Gardner owned the house for awhile after it was built, as it is shown under his name on the map of 1831. He probably sold or gave it to Theodore around the time of his marriage to Lucy Anne Withington in 1832.

Stephen Gardner's homestead was located on the south side of the road (see 642 Main Street, Form #25,) and for several decades in the middle of the 19th century as his children grew up and established households of their own, both sides of the county road from Lancaster to Boston east of the Town House were dominated by at least two generations of the Gardner family. Gen. Gardner died in 1841, and some of his eleven children lived on at the Gardner homestead until they were married.

Four children were born to Theodore and Lucy Anne in this house between 1833 and 1836, but by the middle of the century, Theodore and at least one of his brothers and their families had moved to Minnesota, where they were engaged in the flour business. Theodore seems to have held on to the farm for a number of years, however, gradually dividing out pieces on the periphery. In 1850 he sold a quarter-acre house lot on the Great Road at the east end of his property, on which the house at today's 621 Main Street was built. (See Form #73.) The next year he sold a similar piece adjoining it to Mrs. Eunice Burgess. (See Form #74, 631 Main Street.) Later owners of the farm sold off more small pieces, as well.

Sometime before 1857 the farm was purchased by David Carpenter. As listed in Bolton tax records, in 1870 it was 78 acres in size, with two barns and a carriagehouse. David Carpenter died in 1880 at the age of 87, and the property was inherited by his wife, Diana Carpenter. Their daughter, Ellen, married Amos H. Powers, and Ellen inherited the property upon her mother's death in 1890. Ellen and Amos built the house at 651 Main Street (see Form #76) in about 1880 on a small parcel divided out from the farm. They lived there for several years while her parents were still alive, and moved back to the family farmhouse after her father died.

Amos Powers (1847-1933) was a blacksmith as well as a farmer, and had carried on his trade at at least three other locations in Bolton center--the Holman Inn blacksmith shop, the former Bolton Shoe Factory at 664 Main Street (see Form #23,) which he owned for several years, and at the Sawyer mill complex in what later became Pond Park (see Form #916). When the area around the deteriorated mill buildings was converted to a park in 1903, he moved part of the blacksmith shop from the mill pond to 649 Main Street, where he attached it to the barn. It was demolished in 1975.

By 1930, still under the ownership of Mr. Powers and other family members, the farm had been reduced to 65 acres. Ellen and Amos Powers died in 1931 and 1933, both in their late eighties. The property was next owned by the Powers' son, Frank Powers (1880-1973.) After his marriage to Edith Newton they lived for a while further west on Main Street, but returned to #649 after his father's death. During the Great



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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Depression, and into the 1970s, they continued to maintain the property as a small farm, growing vegetables, selling eggs, and providing meat for their family. They used the old blacksmith shop as a corn barn or granary. During Frank and Edith's ownership, pasture land on the rear part of the farm was used by their neighbor at 651 Main, Charles Mace, to graze his livestock, as well as by cattle from Howard Atwood's Orchard View Farm at 579 Main Street.

Frank Powers, a carpenter and house painter, was a longtime Town Clerk of Bolton, serving from 1911 to 1945. According to the time-honored local tradition, he maintained his office in the house. He was elected State Representative from Bolton in the late 1920s, and was also the town Tree Warden for a number of years in the early 1900s. Edith Powers died in 1968, and Frank in 1973 at the age of 93. The property is still in the Powers family.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

Maps and atlases: 1831: Stephen P. Gardner; 1857: D. Carpenter; 1870: D. Carpenter; 1898: AH Powers. Marvin, Abijah. "Bolton," in Jewett, C.F., ed. *History of Worcester County*. Vol. I. Boston: C. F. Jewett & Co., 1879. (Background.)

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Bolton Historical Society: property files, newspaper articles, etc.

Bolton tax lists.



#397