



UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_  
 USGS QUADRANGLE \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

AREA

F

FORM NO.

415

Town ACTON

Address 128 Main Street

Historic Name Jones Tavern

Use: Present institutional/educational

Original residential/commercial

**DESCRIPTION**

Date 1732 / 1818

Source "Mill Corner"/Phalen/Nylander notes

Style Georgian/Federal

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric wood clapboard

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) none

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting Northwest corner of Main and Railroad Sts., at commercial center of South Acton Village, among mid 19th c. commercial and residential properties

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date May 1990

**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

Listed on the National Register .

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Atlas/Birdseye/Map: 1831, 1856, 1870, 1875, 1886, 1889, 1892.  
Acton Historical Society, Jenks Library Files.  
Nylander and Forbes, "Mill Corner", 1989.  
Nylander, Robert, research notes, 1980s.  
Phalen, History of Town of Acton, 1954.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: F-415
Property Name: 128 Main Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - 128 MAIN STREET

Jones Tavern is one of the best local examples of Federal architecture with its two traditional 5-bay, 2 1/2 story, center entrance facades. Built in several stages the building articulates the growth of the commercial center and displays two main facades, a 1-story side ell on the north side, and a large 3-story gable end rear ell projecting from the southwest corner of the dwelling. The Tavern rests on a granite foundation and retains wood clapboards. There are four massive chimneys; one at the ridge near the north gable end, one low on the west slope near the side ell, one centered on the ridge of the south facade, and one on the north slope of the rear ell.

The earliest part of the house is the 2-story, 5-bay facade facing Railroad Street. In 1750 the rear ell projecting from the southwest corner was added and in 1818 the Federal facade facing Main Street was added forming a hipped roof at the southeast corner and gable roof at the north end.

The Railroad Street facade has a center entrance of a bold 6-panelled door with oval lights in the top panels. The Federal door has tapered squared pilasters applied to a slightly projecting frame. The full entablature includes a molded architrave, wide frieze, and projecting cornice/lintel. Windows have 6/9 sash with slightly projecting plain frames. The second story windows abut the eave overhang. This original Georgian section of the house has a large center chimney. The Main Street facade is similar to the Railroad Street facade with same center entrance including door and surround, the same 6/9 windows and frames. There are two chimneys, neither of which is a center chimney. Both are near the north gable end, one at the ridge, and one well below on the west slope.

The side elevations and side ells do not conform with a traditional plan due to the stages in which the building evolved. The side ell projecting from the north gable end is sited at an angle. It has an early 20th century door and one 6/6 sash. Its gable end has a projecting cornice and returns indicating a later construction date than the rest of the building. There is one first story 6/6 window and one in the gable peak. All windows in the side ell have plain surrounds. In the north gable end of the main house there are three 6/9 windows at each floor and one 6/6 in the gable peak. The rear ell or side ell when viewing the Railroad Street facade is three stories due to the slope of the terrain. The gable end faces Main Street. In the gable end there is an entrance door and one second story 6/6 window. The side of the large rear ell facing Railroad street has three stories with irregular fenestration. The raised basement or first level has a panelled door on the left end, a regular 6/6 window and a 6-light window near the right end. The next level, which is the first from the gable end and second from the long gable roof side, has a small 6/9 window and a very large 6/6 window. The third story or top level has two 6/6 windows. The gable end of the ell facing west has one 6/6 window at the basement level and one 6/9 window at the other two levels.

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HISTORICAL STATEMENT - 128 MAIN STREET

South Acton, once part of the 1000-acre farm granted to Concord's Major Simon Willard, was sold to Ephraim and Samuel Jones and Jonathan Knight in 1701. The first fulling mill was established and throughout the 18th and 19th century there were active mill privileges on Fort pond Brook at Mill Corner where Main Street (once known as Maynard Road) and High, Maple, and School Streets intersect. South Acton was the first village center, preceding Acton Centre, which became the institutional center. With the advent of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1844 came the major growth of South Acton as an industrial village.

Mill Corner, later known as Exchange Square was the heart of the 18th century mill and commercial village and of the 19th century industrial railroad village. The intersection of the main north-south transportation route and School Street which was the most direct route to Concord from the early 1700s also had the railroad with depot, several mid 19th century commercial structures, and Stow Street which ended at Railroad Street before the overpass railroad bridge was built in 1906.

The first part of Jones Tavern was built in 1732 on land given to Samuel Jones Jr. by his father when he married. Samuel Jones was one of the first settlers of Acton who with his brother Ephraim established the first fulling mill at Fort Pond Brook. Jones owned a large amount of land and gave a substantial parcel to his son Samuel Jones, Jr. in 1732, three years before the town was incorporated. Jones, Jr. built the 5-bay, 2-story, gable roof part now facing Railroad Street. The house was sited to face south, a common tradition for First Period, Georgian and Federal houses. Former research and physical evidence indicates that the 1732 house was built with casement windows. In 1750 Samuel Jones, Jr. added a lean-to the west end of the house and opened a store and tavern, the first in Acton. The tavern was a gathering place during the Revolutionary War.

In 1818 Aaron Jones, son of Samuel Jr. and father of Elnathan, enlarged the house by adding a 2/3 house, forming the Main Street facade. In all likelihood it was at that time that the changes were made to the Railroad Street facade because the entry and windows are the same on both sides. The result was one of the best local examples of Federal architecture.

Samuel Jones, Jr.'s store continued with successive generations of Jones as proprietors including Samuel, Jr. (1707-1802), Aaron Jones (1754-1836), and Elnathan Jones (1795-1873). In 1845 Elnathan Jones turned the store over to his son-in-law, James Tuttle (1818-1898) who expanded the business with additional buildings and partners to eventually become Tuttle, Jones, & Wetherbee. This included Tuttle's brother-in-law Elnathan Jones, Jr. (1829-1904).

In the late 19th century Elnathan Jones Jr. established a dairy farm on the family farm. The superintendent lived here as well as boarders, most of whom were Tuttle, Jones, & Wetherbee employees.

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