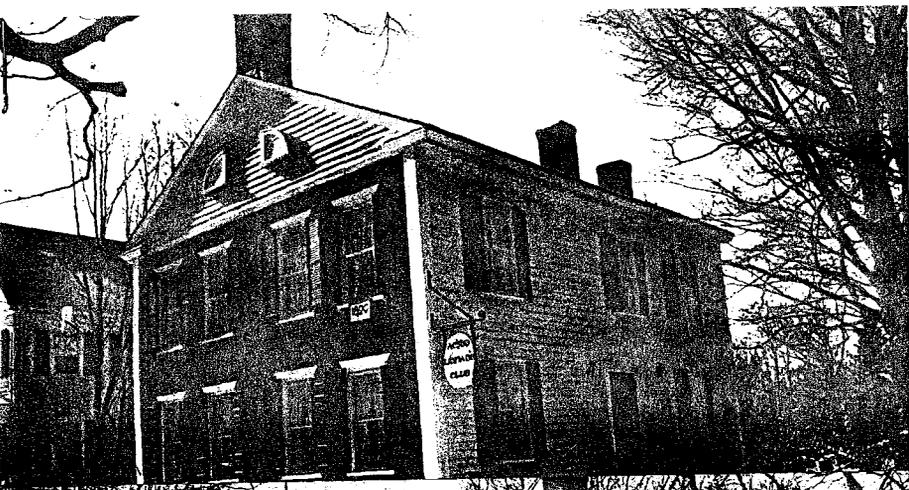
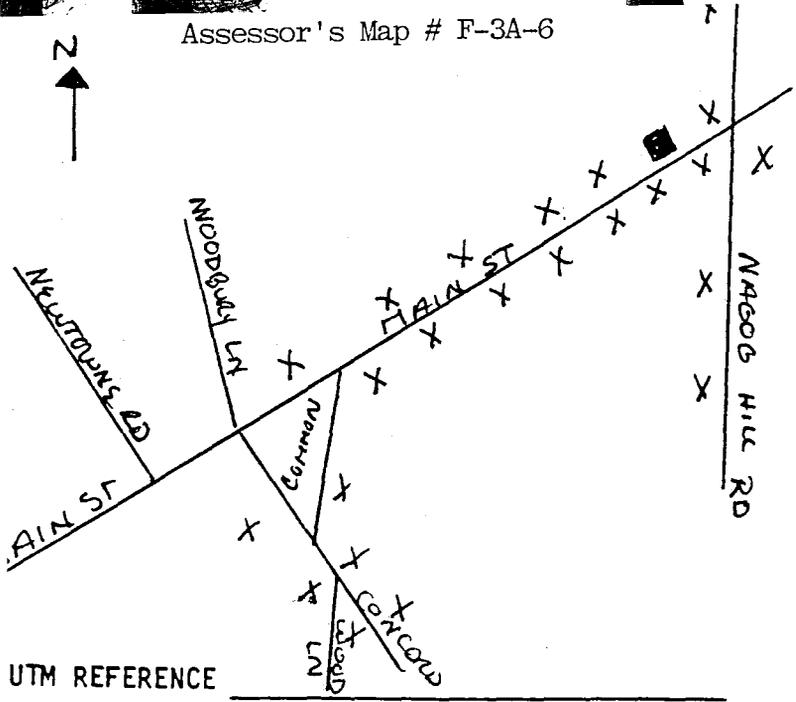


AREA 3 FORM NO. 87



Assessor's Map # F-3A-6



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

ACTON  
 Address 504 Main Street  
 Historic Name The Chapel  
 Acton Women's Club  
 Present civic / institutional  
 Original religious  
 DESCRIPTION  
1829  
 Source Phalen / Nylander notes  
 Style Federal / Greek Revival  
 Architect unknown  
 Prior Wall Fabric brick / clapboard  
 Buildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) gable front doors replaced with windows, doors added to sides  
 Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acres less than one acre.

Setting At village center - north side main auto route - among 19th century dwellings and near late 19th century civic buildings

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date March 1990

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

LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER IN 1983  
ACTON CENTRE HISTORIC DISTRICT

**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**

Atlases / Birdseye, Maps: 1851, 1856, 1871, 1875, 1889, 1892.  
Fletcher, Acton In History, 1890.  
Phalen, History of the Town of Acton, 1954.  
National Register Nomination, MHC, 1983.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:  ACTON	Form No:  B 87
Property Name: 504 Main St.	

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

HISTORICAL STATEMENT - 504 MAIN STREET

Acton Centre, once known as Acton Village, developed as the civic and institutional center of the large sprawling town which has several 19th century village centers. Acton Centre took on its suburban institutional form around an elongated Common from 1806 when the Second Meeting House was built and several local citizens bought surrounding farms and laid out house lots and built an hotel and some commercial buildings around the Common. The only industrial site was a shoe factory (no longer extant) opposite the Common. Most Acton industrial properties were located in South and West Acton due to the water power and location of the railroad in 1844 both of which bypassed Acton Centre. Subsequent development included the Evangelical Church, the Town Hall replacing the Second Meeting House, and finally the Library as well as many mid-19th century Greek Revival houses for artisans and professionals. Acton Centre is the approximate geographic center of Acton and appropriately remains the civic center.

Main Street has always been a main route through Acton serving as an early native trail and later a carriage route. From the early 1800s when Acton Centre developed into the civic center the section of Main Street from west of Concord Road to Nagog Hill Road was two carriage lanes separated by a long narrow greensward strip that was part of the Common. In the late 1800s Main Street was known as Elm Street for the rows of elms and other trees planted by the Committee established to beautify the Town Common. The 20th century highway improvement of Route 27 resulted in the shift of Main Street to a two lane road north of the Common.

This building was constructed in 1829 as a Chapel for the Evangelical Society. In 1832 when the Reverend James Trask Woodbury was called to minister to those who had been dismissed from the First Congregational Church the Evangelical Church of Acton was formed. When built the Chapel had two entrance doors in the gable front facade. Once it was no longer used by the Evangelical Church which built a meeting house on the site of the present church (12 Concord Rd.) as early as 1833, the building was a 2-family home. According to the mid to late 19th century maps, Dr. Harris Cowdry and his heirs owned the Chapel. In 1924 it was remodelled with the assistance of Edwin R. Clark for the Acton Women's Club. The Club had been formed in 1915 and from 1920 had been meeting in Dr. Cowdry's old house, 508 Main Street. The Club was organized by Mrs. Luther Conant 3rd and met in the Congregational Church until purchasing 508 Main Street, which they sold five years later to purchase and refurbish this building. It was at that time that the main facade entrances were replaced with windows and entrances were added to the two side elevations maintaining the consistency and symmetry of form and design.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: B-87
Property Name: 504 Main St.	

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - 504 MAIN STREET

The Acton Woman's Club, also known as the Chapel, is one of the more interesting buildings at Acton Centre for its use of brick and clapboards. Although of domestic scale it is a public building and one of only a few early 19th century buildings with brick ends in Acton. The 4-bay, gable front structure is built on a granite foundation, has brick and wood clapboard exterior siding and asphalt roofing. There is a gable-end rear ell that projects to the west side and three tall rectangular chimneys with corbelled tops; one just inside each gable end wall and one in the rear ell.

The south facade that faces Main Street has four Greek Revival style windows with 6/6 sash set into slightly recessed wood frames with splayed wood lintels and flanked by panelled shutters. The brick wall extends to the returns of the gable peak which is wood clapboard. Two blind 1/4 round fans set in slightly projecting molding are situated in the gable peak.

The clapboard east and west sides of the building are symmetrical each having three bays and a panelled center door entrance with small lights in the top panels and Greek Revival door surrounds with full pediment on a wide entablature and plain pilasters. Windows have 6/6 sash with plain frames and panelled shutters. At the entrances there is a modern iron railing. On the west side of the building there is a decorative central roof pediment. Also there is a fourth first-story bay tucked into the corner near the rear ell. The water table lining the two clapboard sides wraps to form a base for the plain cornerboards.

Only 1/2 of the gable-end rear ell is visible projecting beyond the west side of the main building. There is a mid 20th century panelled entrance door and one 6-light window above. The foundation of this barn-like rear ell is fieldstone.

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