

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

B

FORM NO.

82



TOWN ACTON

ADDRESS 511 Main Street

HISTORIC NAME William Morehouse

Mrs. S.N. Morehouse (1889)

USE: Present single family residential

Original single family residential

DESCRIPTION

DATE 1874

SOURCE NR Nomination

STYLE Queen Anne

ARCHITECT unknown

EXTERIOR WALL FABRIC wood clapboard / shi

OUTBUILDINGS 3-car modern clapboard garage
with small cupola (1980s)

MAJOR ALTERATIONS (with dates) recent re
removal of color from trim - now all white

CONDITION good

MOVED no DATE n/a

ACREAGE 2.76 acres

SETTING Southeast corner of Main St. and
Nagog Hill Rd., at edge of village distri
with mid 19th c. residential surrounds -
newly landscaped and cleared lot

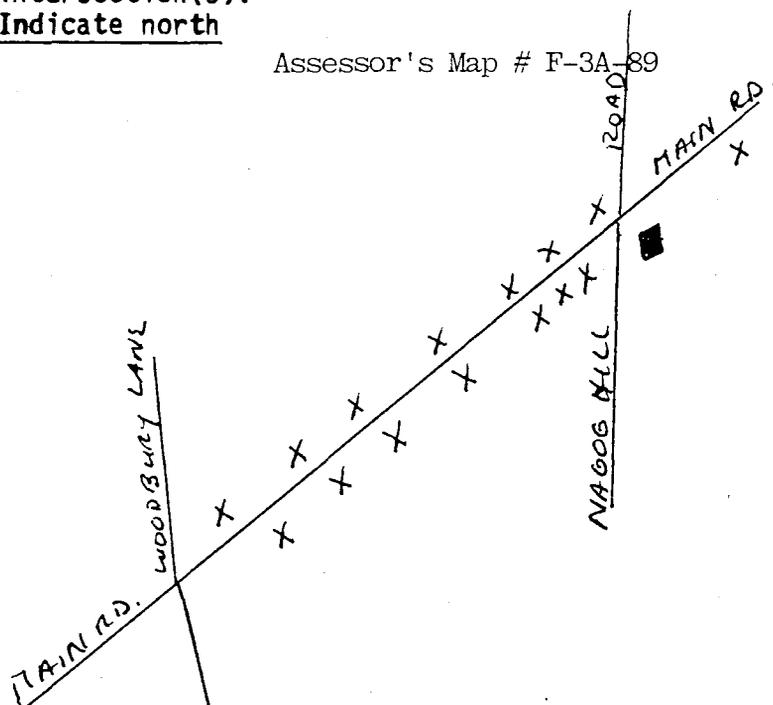
RECORDED BY Gretchen G. Schuler

ORGANIZATION Acton Historical Commission

DATE March 1990

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

Assessor's Map # F-3A-89



UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: B-82
Property Name: 511 Main St.	

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - 511 MAIN STREET

The 2 1/2 story, gable front farmhouse displays an L-plan popular in the 19th century vernacular domestic buildings. One of only two Acton Centre buildings on brick foundations, the house is sheathed in wood clapboards and decorative butt and scalloped shingles and has an asphalt shingle roof. A brick chimney pierces the main block roof below the ridge on the west side. It appears to have been rebuilt recently.

The 3-bay, main facade of the Italianate / Queen Anne house has a sidehall entry a full pediment gable peak, and bands of decorative shingles between the first and second story (scalloped) and in the gable peak (butt). The side hall entry includes a late 19th century panelled door with paired round headed lights. The pedimented doorhood is supported by brace brackets and has a wide fascia or barge board on the gable with decorative blocks that are scored. Concrete steps with iron railings lead to the entrance which also has a metal storm door. Windows have 1/1 sash with synthetic louvered shutters. Under the first story window sills are small tab like brackets. There are two first story windows, three on the second story and two small (paired) windows in the gable peak. The narrow corner boards and heavy corner brackets support the rake with beaded facing board which has the same decorative detail found on the doorhood. The 2-story side ell projects to the east and has a full length shed roof porch with plain square posts and plain balustrade all replaced with new materials. Within the porch the first story has a 1/1 sash, a glass and wood panelled door, a narrow stair hall 1/1 window and a regular 1/1 sashed window all without shutters. There are three 1/1 second story windows with louvered shutters.

The 2-bay southwest side of the main block has a 1-story shed roof projecting bay also on a brick foundation. A modern greenhouse window has been installed in the front of this projecting bay while the sides retain the narrow 1/1 windows with tabs under the sills. There are two second story windows both with shutters also. On the east side of the house the main block in front of the side ell has no windows, only the decorative scalloped shingle band. The gable end of the ell indicates that the ell and full length porch were built at the same time as the main house due to the scalloped shingled band between the first and second story clapboards. These five rows of decorative shingles tie together the various components of the house. Windows in the gable end include paired 1/1 sash at the first and second story. A 1-story rear ell projects behind the side ell and is only barely visible from the public way. There is a paired casement window.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

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HISTORICAL STATEMENT - 511 MAIN STREET

Acton Centre, also known as Acton Village in the late 19th century, developed as the civic and institutional center of the large 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, 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 from 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 mid to late 1800s Main Street was known as Elm Street for the rows of elms and other trees planted to beautify the Town Common. The 20th century highway improvement of Route resulted in the shift of Main Street to a two lane road north of the Common.

This house is built on the site of the Brooks Tavern (ca. 1760-1873). Much of the early history is associated with Brooks Tavern which was opposite the First Meeting House and later the Centre School. This area on the northeast corner of Main and Nagog Hill Road was the first Common. Thus Brooks Tavern served not only as a tavern and store from 1770 to 1807, but also as a meeting place for many town affairs. When the Tavern burned in 1873 the present house was built in the following year. In the 1880s William Morehouse lived here and was a farmer. The 1889 map shows Mrs. S.N. Morehouse as owner of the property.

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