

AREA

C

FORM NO.

244

Town ACTON

Address 533 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name George Gardner (1871)

Use: Present multi-family dwelling

Original single family dwelling

DESCRIPTION

Date circa 1855

Source maps/visual

Style Greco-Italianate

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric wood shingles

Outbuildings see 531 Mass Ave

Major Alterations (with dates) e11 remo

(20thc); wood shingles (late 19thc)

Condition Fair

Moved no Date

Acreage less than one acre

Setting Among a row of mid to late 19th

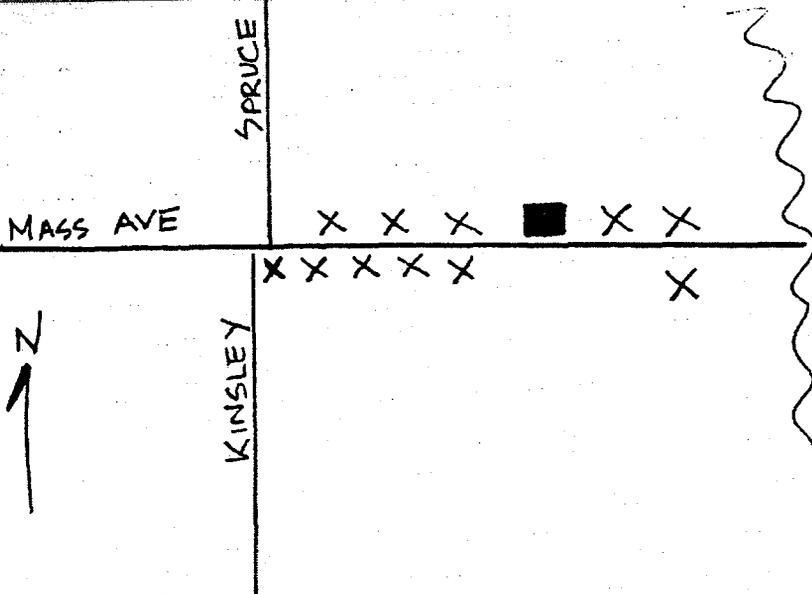
century houses lining Massachusetts Ave

immediately east of West Acton village.

Recorded by Nylander/Schuler and Johnson

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date March 1990



UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

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

See Inventory Continuation Form

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

See Inventory Continuation Form

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Atlases/Maps: 1856; 1871; 1875; 1889

Directories: 1883; 1902; 1913.

Phalen, History of the Town of Acton; Fletcher, Acton in History.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: C-244
Property Name: 533 Massachusetts Ave	

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

533 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

Built circa 1855 (Walling, 1856 /architectural evidence), the house at 533 Massachusetts Avenue was occupied by George Gardner by the 1860s (Walling, 1871). Gardner lived at this address as late as 1883. By 1902 it was home to Gardner's wife, Violetta, his daughter Henrietta and his son Walter C., a corn salesman. Walter C. Gardner lived here at least through 1913.

George Gardner was a piano and organ dealer. His advertisement in the 1883 directory notes that pianos, organs, strings for musical instruments, and sheet music were available at his "warerooms" in Clinton, Massachusetts and at his "warerooms and residence" in West Acton. The adjacent barn (attached to the house on the 1875 map) presumably housed the piano warehouse listed in the 1883 directory (see 531 Mass Ave).

The building of this house was part of the first phase of residential development during the decade immediately following the 1845 arrival of the railroad in West Acton. This section of Massachusetts Avenue, near the depot, was settled early. By 1856 there were approximately 35 dwellings in the village. Many were sidehall cottages like this one. At mid-century West Acton has a post office, doctor's office, cider mill, blacksmith shop, store, tavern, tin shop, school and church. Before the railroad, the "village" at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue (Harvard Turnpike, 1799), Arlington Street (1735), and Central Street (1766) was a sparsely settled outpost known as the "west part of town."

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VENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

SSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: C-244
Property Name: 533 Massachusetts Ave	

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

533 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE / ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The 1 1/2 story sidehall cottage at 533 Massachusetts Avenue has a gable roof, granite foundation and is clad in wood shingles. An example of a Greek Revival design with added Italianate details. The L-shape structure consists of the gable front block and a two story side ell with a gable roof.

The gable-front facade (south) is two bays wide and three bays deep. Typical of Greek Revival design, are the corner posts and the enclosed pediment framed by a molded cornice and wide frieze board. The pediment is punctuated by two 2/2 windows in wide applied enframements. Italianate details are the first story polygonal bay (with a paneled base, molded cornice and three 1/1 windows), and the flat roofed entrance porch supported by turned columns and pierced brackets. The single pane and wood paneled door dates from the early 20th century. The west facade of the main block is lined with three 2/2 windows. The wall is finished with a wide wrapped frieze and narrow sill molding.

The east facade is dominated by the wrapped open porch extending across the first floor of the five bay ell. Composed of turned posts and pierced brackets, the porch has a hipped roof. Unevenly spaced first story 1/1 windows have plain applied enframements. There are two doors, one identical to that on the main block, the second door is plain plywood. Above the porch are four 2/2 windows topped by a narrow frieze board. The ell's gable end has molded cornice and returns, narrow corner boards, a first story vertical board door and one second story 2/2 window. A small salt-box addition is attached to the rear of the ell.

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