

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
C	231



Location Acton

Address 560-564 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name Luke Blanchard (1856)

Present commercial/religious

Original single family residential

DESCRIPTION

Construction circa 1850

Source visual/maps

Style Greek Revival

Architect none

Exterior Wall Fabric synthetic siding

Outbuildings garage (see reverse)

Major Alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

see reverse

Condition Fair

Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

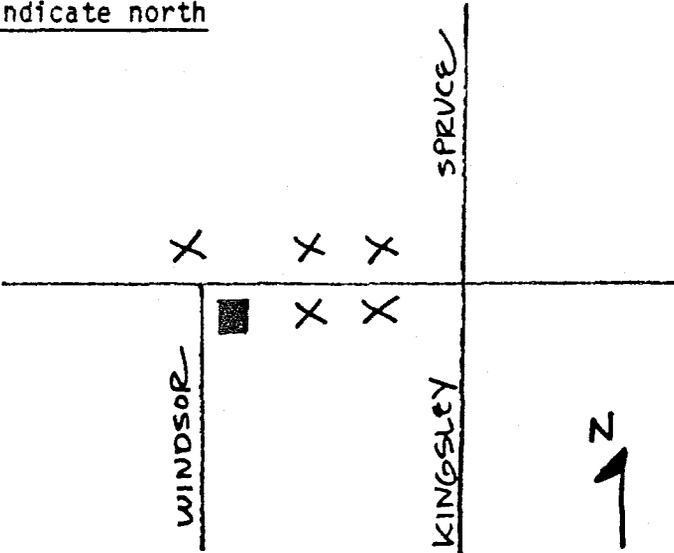
Acreage \_\_\_\_\_

Setting At the corner of Massachusetts

Avenue and Windsor street in the heart

of West Acton's commercial center.

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). F-2A-117  
Indicate north



UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

USGS QUADRANGLE \_\_\_\_\_

SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by B. Nylander/Schuler and Johnson

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date June 1988/ March 1990

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

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

Photo file/ AHS

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:  ACTON	Form No:  C-231
Property Name: 560-564 Massachusetts	

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

560-564 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE / ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The large 2 1/2 story gable-roof structure at 560-564 Massachusetts Avenue rests on a granite and concrete foundation and is sheathed in synthetic siding. The asphalt roof is covered with solar panels on the south slope. Originally a Greek Revival style residence, the much altered building now houses a Christian Science church and a store. Located on the corner, the building is sited with its long facade along Massachusetts Avenue, and its gable end facing Windsor Avenue. A 1 1/2 story gable-roof addition is attached to the long south facade. Several attached barns were destroyed in the 1913 West Acton fire.

The long Massachusetts Avenue facade was originally five bays deep with a one story rear ell. The ell was converted to two stories in the 1950s; window placement and sash have been altered throughout the years. Unevenly arranged windows are 6/6 with one group of three small windows up close to the eave. A new entrance door is contained within plain pilasters and a molded lintel. The enclosed gable end contains two 6/6 windows. The fascia, cornice, and frieze are covered with siding. The five bay second story consists of 6/6 windows in simple surrounds. The central entrance is contained within a flat enframement and 3/4 sidelights topped by a narrowly projecting lintel. A contemporary hipped bay window and two 6/6 windows flank the entrance.

The south facade of the main block is lined with one 6/6 window, on the first floor, and a 6/6 window and contemporary door reached by new metal stairs, on the second floor. An attached 1 1/2 story gable-roof addition obscures the remaining portion of the wall. The altered addition is lined with one 6/6 window in the gable peak and two tiny contemporary windows on the first floor. There is a low gable-roof garage on the property.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:  ACTON	Form No:  C-231
Property Name: 560-564 Massachusetts	

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

560-564 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE / HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

Constructed circa 1850, as a large Greek Revival style residence, the building at 560-564 Massachusetts Avenue was occupied by Luke Blanchard by 1856 (Walling). The building, extensively altered, currently houses the Christian Science church and reading room and a wallpaper store.

Luke Blanchard (1826-1901) arrived in West Acton from Boxborough in 1852. He lived at 560-564 Massachusetts Avenue until his death in 1901. The house then became the property of his son Arthur, a Boston merchant (see 56 Windsor). Luke Blanchard was a prosperous and prominent member of the West Acton community. He was married to Jerusha Vose. A significant figure in Acton's apple business, Blanchard owned an extensive produce trading business, centered in West Acton but active in the Boston market. At the turn of the century, he shipped 60,000 barrels of apples from West Acton in one season. Blanchard's civic activities included his presidency of the original Citizens Library (1883, see 21 Windsor) and his donation of a memorial, commemorating his ancestors participation in the Revolutionary War, constructed on Prospect Street in 1895.

The building of Luke Blanchard's house was part of the first phase of residential development following the 1845 introduction of the railroad in West Acton. This section of Massachusetts Avenue, near the depot was settled early. By 1856 there were approximately thirty-five dwellings in the village. At mid-century West Acton had 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."