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December 12, 2003

Mr. Garry Rhodes
Acton Building Department
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
grhodes@acton-ma.gov

RE: 60 Great Road Landmark Sign Request

Dear Garry:

Per request, the Historical Commission would like to comment on this application. We have received the application package and have reviewed the materials. We have the following comments:

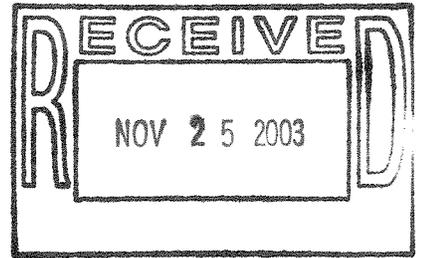
The photograph of the existing sign shows "Tavern Square" at the top, an illustrative panel at the midsection, and below a somewhat smaller "60 Great Road". From our perspective, it is beneficial for the sign to retain the lower address listing. For one thing, it ties the sign and the rendering more closely to the actual building – if it were absent, the whole thing might be less believable as an historical fact, and more 'artistic license'. Further, simply on an aesthetic basis, the sign looks better to have the rendering bordered by this lower graphic – if it were missing the composition would be floating and ungrounded, needing visual weight to the bottom. Lastly, in terms of public safety I would think the more listings the better – sometimes it is hard to spot the address when you are in traffic- but this is certainly not in the purview of the HC.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Grover, Chair
Acton Historical Commission

Cc. bos@acton-ma.gov

BOS



TOWN OF ACTON

Building Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Board of Selectmen **Date:** November 25, 2003
From: Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner *[Signature]*
Subject: Landmark Sign Request 60 Great Road

Section 7.5.8 of the Zoning Bylaw allows the Board of Selectmen to designate signs as "Landmark Signs". These signs do not require a sign license, but must meet the setback requirement of five feet from the sideline of the street. These signs may be erected in addition to any other allowed sign on the property.

The section provides wide latitude in the determination of such signs. *" Any SIGN determined by the Board of Selectmen to be of particular artistic or historic merit that is unique or extraordinarily significant to the Town and its residents. Such a SIGN may be new or old, it may or may not comply with this Bylaw, it may be a picture, mural, statue, sculpture or other form of artistic expression, it may warrant preservation in its original form or may be in need of restoration, or it may be a marker to identify or commemorate a particular significant location, a historic event or person, or a natural feature."*

The proposed sign was originally installed and licensed as a Business Center ID sign for 60 Great Road and it complied with all the requirements of the bylaw for such a sign. All of the tenant names have now been removed from the sign and it is no longer a complying Business Center ID sign. The applicant wishes to maintain this sign as a landmark while applying for a new ID sign to be located on the frontage nearer to Bursaw.

The Board of Selectmen have made four such determinations of Landmark signs. First for three new signs carved into rocks at Mill Corner in South Acton. The fourth was for the Exchange Hall sign located on the building façade in South Acton. This was an old sign needing repair. To my knowledge these are the only signs which have applied for such a determination under the current bylaw.

If the Board considers approving the request I would recommend the following conditions be attached:

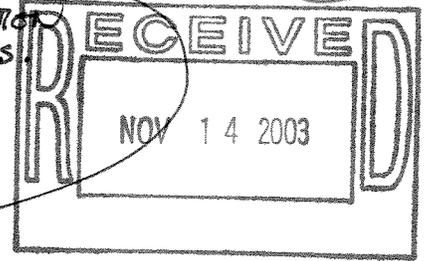
That the sign is restored with generally the same format as it appears now with no business identifications to appear on the restored Landmark sign.

That the 60 Great Road address be removed from the Landmark Sign as it would be more appropriately located on the new Business Center ID sign.

I would further suggest the Board seek comments about this sign from both the Historical Commission and the East Acton Village Planning Committee.

GARRY R. - WE WILL NEED COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOU FOR BOS CONSIDERATION, PLS

CHRIS - PLS. SCHEDULE FOR Tavern Square
SEL. BUSINESS 12/1/03 36 Proctor Street
Acton, MA. 01720



November 13, 2003

Board of Selectmen
Town of Acton
472 Main Street
Acton, MA. 01720

Dear Members of The Board:

Enclosed please find a picture of the existing free standing sign at 60 Great Road. I would like your permission to preserve this sign as a Landmark sign as stated in your Bylaw section 7.5.8 which states if a sign is determined by the Board of Selectmen to be of particular artistic or historic merit that is unique or extraordinarily significant to the Town and its residents. Such a sign may be new or old, it may or may not comply with this Bylaw, it may be a picture, mural, statue, sculpture or other form of artistic expression, it may warrant preservation in its original form or may be in need of restoration, or it may be a marker to identify or commemorate a particular significant location, a historic event or person, or a natural feature.

This sign was custom built for the previous owner of the property. It was designed to recognize the original "Nashoba Tavern" circa 1870, which occupied this location from 1909 to the 1940's. It has a canvas photo painted to reflect the original structure. If this sign is designated a Landmark sign, I plan to restore it. I believe this will make a fine permanent addition to this location and the East Acton Village area.

I am also working with Belle Choate for a conforming business center identification sign for five business's located at Tavern Square which will better serve the business needs.

I hope this letter and the attachments will answer your questions.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Bertolami

Leo Bertolami
Tavern Square



FORM G - STREETScape

AREA FORM NO.

A	48, 49, 50,
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 10 BOYLSTON STREET
 BOSTON, MA 02116

Town ACTON

Street Name Great Road

Addresses (inclusive) 52, 54, 56, 60/62

DESCRIPTION

Original Date or Period 1870's-80's

Dominant Architectural Styles
 vernacular Italianate

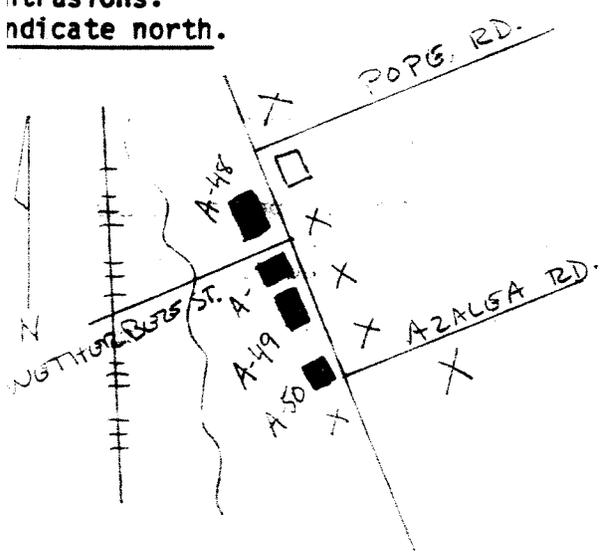
Other Intrusions none

Other Information see p. 3

Acreeage approx. 2.3 acres



Sketch Map: Draw map of street, clearly showing all buildings; indicate street addresses for all buildings; identify intrusions. Indicate north.



UTM REFERENCE

Parcel #s--see P. 3

Recorded by A. Forbes

USGS QUADRANGLE

Organization Acton Hist. Comm.

SCALE

Date Sept., 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

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

A line of four houses on the west side of Great Road at the intersection of Wetherbee Street remains the most "village-like" of the residential development at East Acton during the 1870's and '80's. Typical of that time, all are oriented with their gable ends to the street, and have bay windows, 2-over-2-sash, and other features common to the vernacular Italianate architecture that was prevalent at the time. Probably the earliest of the four, #52, is a 1 1/2-story, 3-bay cottage with a 1-story side ell and rectangular bay window. It is trimmed with paired brackets, and has a later Colonial Revival facade veranda.

Two of the houses, #s 54 and 60/62, are nearly twins. Each is a tall, 2 1/2-story, 3-bay structure with a 2-story north side wing with attached, gable-end barn/carriage house. On both, a 2-story polygonal bay window abuts the southeast corner. #54 retains a 4-panel door with applied moldings, flanked by narrow divided sidelights, and like

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain historical importance of streetscape and how the streetscape relates to the development of the community.

All the early owners of these four houses were closely connected with community life at East Acton late in the nineteenth century. According to the 1875 and 1889 atlases, #52 belonged to W.C. Reed. (This may be Warren Reed, listed as a farmer on Nagog Street, [the name for Great Road at the time,] in the 1883 directory.) Nahum C. Reed (d. 1904), however, is also listed on Nagog Street at that time. He is shown in 1890 as owning a house located, like this one, on a half-acre lot. He was the gate tender and station agent at the East Acton depot from 1871 through 1898, and it is much more likely that the name is misprinted on the atlas maps, and that it was he who lived in the house.

Both #s 54 and 56 are shown as belonging to James E. Billings, (1823-1902.) Formerly owner and resident of the Billings farm at #199 Great Road, (see form #38,) he relocated to New Hampshire in 1881, but appears to have returned to Acton ca. 1883. (#54, which has a brick foundation, may have been built at that time. A building is shown on the site of #56 in 1875, however, and the granite foundation there indicates a date in the 1870's.) James Billings had begun the East Acton general store with Daniel Wetherbee in 1850, served several terms as a Selectman, and was the East Acton postmaster from 1885 to 1900. After his death in 1902, his son, Fred, a house painter, and his wife Mary Griffin Billings continued to live at #54. The house was subsequently bought by Henry Engman. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases: 1875, 1889.
Tax lists, Almanacs, and Directories.
Robert Nylander research notes. (Cont.)

ACHTUSE
File of
NY

CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

Form No:

ACTON

A-48-50,

Property Name:

52-62 Great Rd.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Secretary, Boston

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Flagg carried on the store, eventually going into partnership with George Russell of Concord, to form the company of Flagg and Russell. By the mid-1880's they had opened a second store, nicknamed the "prison store," at 395/7 Commonwealth Ave. near the Reformatory in West Concord, as well. It appears that at some point, probably as a result of the temperance movement, the tavern license at #65 Great Road lapsed, but the store continued to serve unlicensed liquor from barrels in the "cheese room" in the back cellar--the only place in town, according to a young Acton resident of the time, where you got "cheese" by turning the faucet of a barrel. After his death, the house fell to the Flagg's son, I. Warren Flagg, a real estate agent in Boston. Although it shown as his residence until at least 1913, by 1909 the Nashoba Tavern was located here.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Acton Vital Records.
Phalen, Fletcher.
Letter from Charles I. Miller, (AHS).
Town account books.



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

For

Dr. Mrs. O. L. Clark

So Acton

Mass.

PREMIUM LIST
TWELFTH ANNUAL
ACTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR



Acton Agricultural Association, Incorporated

In Co-operation with Mass. State Dept. of Agriculture

BIG TWO-DAYS FAIR

Town Hall and Grounds, Acton Centre, Mass.

Friday and Saturday

September 28-29, 1928

APPLES OUR SPECIALTY

Don't Ship Us Anything But

APPLES

Kingman & Hearty, Inc.

The House Built on the APPLE

20 North Side Faneuil Hall Market

Boston, Mass.

➔ SLOGAN ➔

You may go North and South and East and West
And THEN you'll find OUR FOOD THE BEST.

Nashoba Tavern

Mohawk Trail

East Acton - Mass.

Telephone Concord 749 (23 miles from Boston, Route No. 2)

Chicken and Steak Dinners

Luncheon A la Carte

Overnight Guests Accommodated

Bridge Teas and Luncheons

EDWARD BUSCH, Proprietor

Our Advertisers Have Confidence In Us

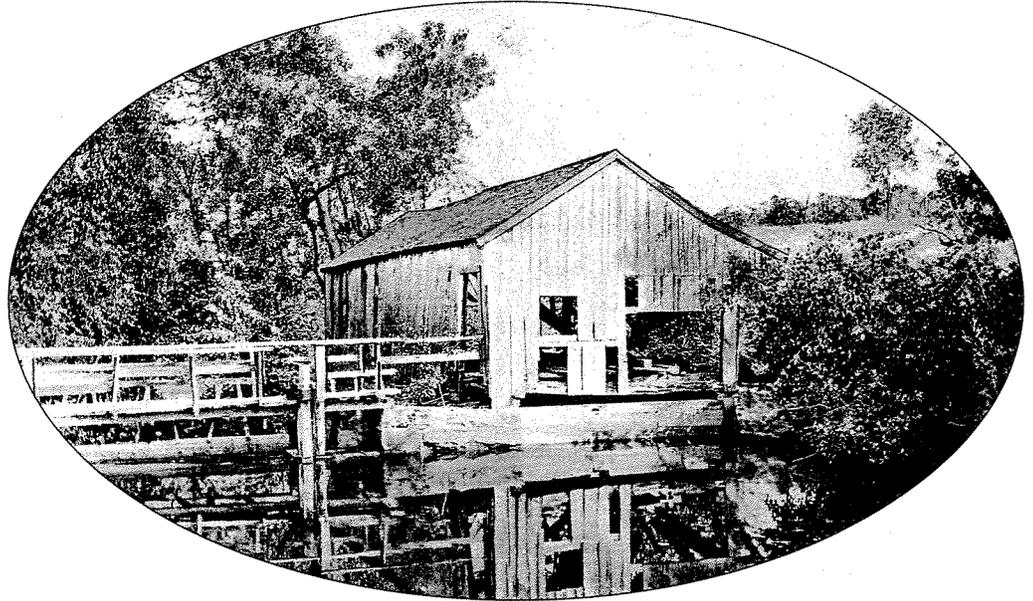
The Wilson Lumber Co



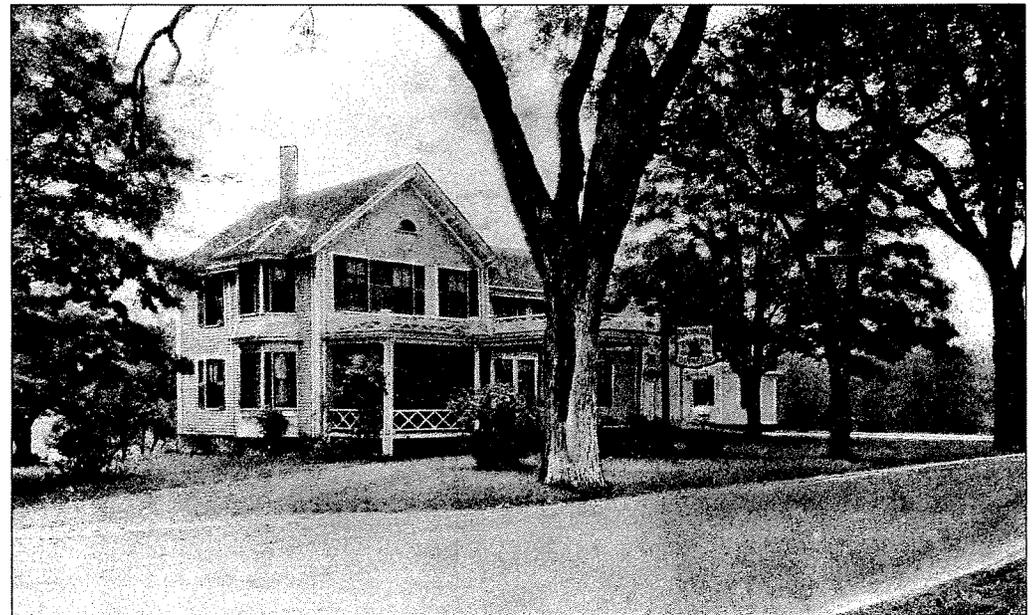
Hill Road. The gambrel roof was a house was severely damaged by fire



inn and store by Daniel Wetherbee. ook.



Daniel Wetherbee's Saw Mill stood on the dam at 119 Concord Road. An early mill owned by John Robbins was on this site, and this may be the actual mill. Nelson Tenney replaced the mill with a hydroelectric generating plant c. 1907.



Nashoba Tavern still stands at 60 Great Road but is now a combination of offices and apartments. For a time, it was owned by Ralph Morse.