

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.94
Historic Name:	Davis, Josiah Store
Common Name:	
Address:	50-52 Belknap St
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	Concord Center
Local No:	G9-771
Year Constructed:	c 1815
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival
Use(s):	Boarding House; General Retail Store; Multiple Family Dwelling House; Public School
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Education
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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CON. 94

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

G9-771

CONCORD

94

Town CONCORD

SEPT 9

(neighborhood or village) _____

Concord Center

Address 50/52 Belknap Street

Historic Name Josiah Davis Store

Present double house

Original store, double house,
school
of Construction ca. 1815

Source maps; style; Keyes

Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation dressed granite

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

Major Alterations (with dates) Mid-20th C.

up-date--see p. 2. Late 20th C.:
pair of casement windows and oriel
bay on east end.

Condition fair

Moved ☐ no ☒ yes Date ca. 1844-1850

Acreage less than one acre

Setting On large lot in neighborhood

of mid-19th to 20th-century houses.

Picket-fenced front yard with granite

posts. High-fenced side yard.

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate North.



Recorded by A. Forbes; research by Ann Young

Organization for Concord Historical Commission

Date (month/day/year) June, 1991

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☒ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Although this is the oldest building on the lower section of Belknap Street, today it is significant for its combination of Federal, Greek and Colonial Revival architecture. A high, 2 1/2-story house with twin ridge chimneys, it has a 1 1/2-story rear ell. The building began as what was undoubtedly Concord's largest store of the early nineteenth century, built ca. 1813-15 on Main Street. After its move to the present location in ca. 1844, it was converted to a double house, and it was at this time that it may have acquired its 6-over-6 windows and six-bay facade arrangement. (For an impression of what the house must have looked like, cf. 189 and 199 Conant Street, the pair of mid-century double houses built by the owners of the Damon Mill at West Concord.)

Today, the overall proportions and the lack of a roof overhang at the gable ends are about the only exterior features that suggest #50/52's early origins. The wide Greek Revival frieze at the cornice line, the pilasters at the house corners, and the entry porch with its tapered square columns undoubtedly date to the time of its conversion. (Cont.)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This building was significant to the town of Concord at several periods during its long history. It began as a large general store, built about 1815 by builder and entrepreneur Josiah Davis next to his new house at #186 Main Street. (See Form # .) Davis expected that area of Main Street to become a new business center for the town, a hope that never materialized. Instead, his store folded for lack of customers, and he was eventually ruined in the financial panic of 1837. He moved to Boston, and his house, store, and land were acquired by pipe-manufacturer David Loring (see # Main Street,) who moved the store building to this location, probably at about the time that Belknap Street was laid out in 1844, possibly as late as 1850.

It was Loring who converted the building to a double house, and rented it out to tenants, some of whom were among the more illustrious of Concord's mid-nineteenth-century residents. In the late 1850's one side was occupied by Richard Barrett, Captain of the Concord militia company, the other by Franklin Sanborn (see #106 Elm Street,) and C.H. Wetherbee. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☒ see continuation sheet

Maps and atlases: 1852, 1856, ca. 1871, 1875, 1889, 1893, 1906; Sanborns from 1903.

Town Directories.

Wheeler. Climate for Freedom, pp. 166-7.

Wheeler House File.

Keyes, III, 406.

Jarvis. (Cont.)

Moss. Thoreau's Surveys in the Concord Library....

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

CON. 94

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CONCORD

Josiah Davis Store

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s) Form No.

94

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

The curious entry arrangement of a six-panel door flanked by two sets of widely-spaced sidelights can be explained by the fact that a double entry was constructed when it was divided into a double house. Typical of the Greek Revival period, both doors had full sidelights, and the outer pair that remain today appear to consist of the outer sidelight from each of the doorways.

Most of the rest of the building's character comes from a radical update of the early twentieth century. At that time the entry was changed as noted above, and several additions were made. A two-story extension was built on the west end, with sleeping porch supported on square posts to form a porch at first-story level. On the east end, the present open porch, also on square columns, was constructed, and over the facade, a shingled shed-roofed dormer was added.

After the school was discontinued, a one-story ell that connected the main rear ell to the rear school building was demolished and replaced by the small shed-roofed bay seen today, leaving the rear section an independent building. Today that building is on a separate lot, and has been converted or rebuilt as a two-story house.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Sanborn, a well-known abolitionist, later newspaper editor and columnist, first lived here at one point after coming to Concord to teach at the little school at #49 Sudbury Road. He was visited here by John Brown in May 1859, only five months before Harper's Ferry. Other tenants included William A. Blaisdell, a retired conductor on the Fitchburg Railroad, and Benjamin F. Wheeler, formerly foreman at J.B. Moore's farm on Lexington Road. The latter lived here with his family; he was crippled by a severe accident, however, and the family kept a small boarding house in their half of the building, under the management of his wife, Mary. (They moved to #68 Sudbury Road in the late 1880's 1893--see Form # .) William Wilde, (see also #68 Sudbury Road,) also lived here for a while.

C.H. Wetherbee is shown as the owner in 1875, and may have purchased the house from David Loring. By 1889 it was the property of Mrs. Sarah Richardson, widow of Jackson Richardson. ~~CHECK MAP FOR THIS~~ (See her home at #245 Main Street, which she had built about 1844). (Cont.)

→ William Barrett,

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CONCORD

Josiah Davis Store

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Area(s) Form No.

94

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

In the 1890's, the property changed function again, with the establishment of the first of two private schools here. This was "Miss White's Home School for Children" under the direction of Miss Mary White, with her sister Flora J. White. The classrooms were in the rear of the house, where the wing had been enlarged by 1903. The building to the rear of the house (today's #28 Belknap, now radically altered to a residence,) was built for the school between 1903 and 1909. The Misses White retired in about 1912, and the school was acquired by Mrs. Eliza Dillingham, to become both an elementary school and "Mrs. Dillingham's Montessori School". (See #33 Middle Street--residence of Mrs. Dillingham and her daughter Susan S. ca. 1915.) In 1919 Concord Academy was founded as an upper school to supplement the Dillinghams' elementary and Montessori Schools. Mrs. Dillingham died in 1920, after which the two schools were joined.

By 1906 the corner lot to the east had become part of the property, and the house was under the ownership of the Holland family. (The Rev. **Franklin M. Holland** (1836-1908) had retired from his ministry in the midwest and come to Concord with his wife, Anna. After the Rev.'s death, **Mrs. Holland** continued to own the house, renting it to the school and other tenants for another 20 years until her death in 1928. By 1927 the elementary and Montessori schools had apparently been discontinued, and the building at the rear had become a residence. In the late 1920's it was occupied by artist Frederick A. Bosley and his family. He built a studio on the lot, which was later torn down.

Mrs. Holland left the property to the town of Concord in her will. It was then divided into two lots--#28 and 50 Belknap. The double house was converted to a single dwelling (#50), with a small apartment (#52) at the west rear.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Vernacular Carpenters.

Concord Vital Records.

Concord Free Library: obituary file.

Walcott. "Concord Roads."

Interview with Eric Parkman Smith, 3/91.

CON. 94

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Community
CONCORD

Property Address
50-52 Belknap Street

Area(s)	Form No.
	94

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Recommended:

☐ Individually ☒ District ☒ Contributing to a Potential Historic District

Criteria:

A	B	C	D
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Anne McCarthy Forbes

Statement of Significance by _____
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

In spite of its having been moved prior to 1850, for its association with both the early commercial development of Main Street through Josiah Davis, and the late nineteenth-century residential development of Concord center, this building meets Criterion A of the National Register. For its updated Greek Revival architecture, it also contributes to residential district encompassing a town center of 17th- through early 20th-century buildings under Criterion C.