

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.277
Historic Name:	Wheeler - Harrington House
Common Name:	Harrington, Joseph House
Address:	249 Harrington Ave
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	West Concord
Local No:	11C-2712, 286
Year Constructed:	r 1745
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Georgian
Use(s):	Agricultural; Horse Or Cattle Farm; Orchard; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Agriculture; Architecture; Community Planning; Conservation
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (07/23/2013)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Stone, Uncut



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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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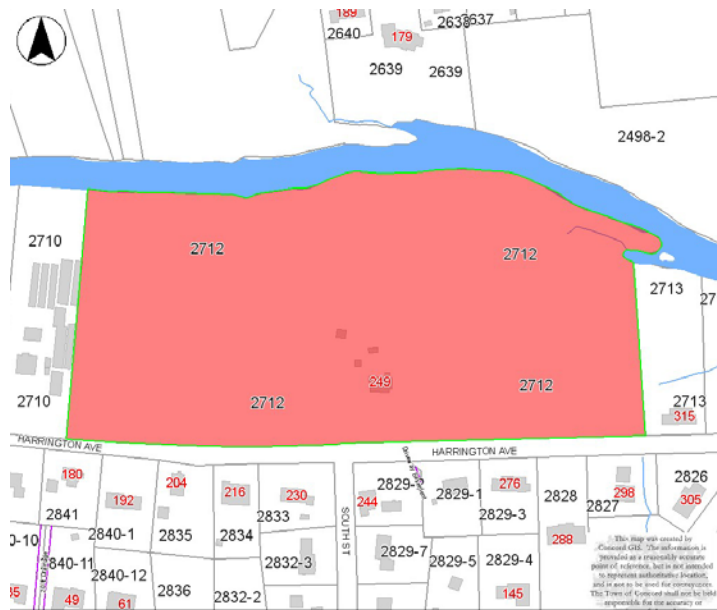
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: A. Forbes
Organization: for Concord Historical Commission
Date (month / year): May 2011

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

Map 11C;
Parcel 2712

Maynard

CON.277

Town: CONCORD

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)
West Concord

Address: 249 Harrington Avenue

Historic Name: Wheeler- Harrington House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: mid-18th century/ 1826-1827

Source: **Probate;** Wheeler House File; architectural evidence

Style/Form: center-chimney 2 ½-story colonial/Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

three late-20th C. wood-frame sheds

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Substantial rebuilding & Federal updates in 1826-27; N. ell with kitchen & sink room added. Greek Revival updates ca. 1840. Windows changed to 2/2 late-19th/early 20th century. Rear kitchen addition ca. 1960.

Condition: good

Moved: no | X | **yes** | | **Date** N/A

Acreage: 15.22 acres

Setting: Sloping site on north side of Harrington Ave.; woods and Assabet River to the rear. Cluster of small late-20th-C. outbuildings close to the house.

RECEIVED

JUN 08 2011

MASS. HIST. COMM.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

In addition to the exterior features recorded on the 1988 Form B (CON.277), information obtained in a 2011 site visit and interior inspection has helped place the Wheeler-Harrington House within the context of Concord and its neighboring communities. The building is highly unusual for Concord as a tall 2-story, center-chimney single-pile, five-bay house with Federal, rather than Colonial, proportions and details. Most houses of similar form and appearance in the Concord area have paired rear chimneys, rather than center chimneys. This anomaly may be the result of a major 1826-27 rebuilding of a mid-18th century house that utilized many timbers from the older frame, while retaining much of the chimney bay including the original chimney stack.

The building is a south-facing, side-gabled house with a two-part, cross-gabled northeast rear ell and a long one-story shed-roofed mid-20th century rear addition. The latter addition, which replaced a lower rear leanto with west jet-by, echoes that earlier section in both form and footprint. The present leanto extends west from the ell along the back of the main house, ending several feet beyond the house's northwest corner. In addition to the main center chimney, which was rebuilt above the roof line in the 1930s, the house has two narrow chimneys - a brick chimney that pierces the east roof slope of the outer northeast ell, and a concrete-block chimney in the center of the rear 20th-century addition.

Structural evidence indicates that the present form of the **main house** is the result of a substantial rebuilding in 1826-27, when the former Wheeler farm was acquired by Joseph Harrington. At that time much of the frame, the roof, and most of the architectural details were replaced, and a considerable amount of older timbers were relocated throughout the building. The roof has the relatively shallow pitch typical of the Federal era. There is little roof overhang, and the shallow eaves are boxed, with a bed molding below and returns on the gable ends. The gable-end trim consists of a rake board and a crown molding that has the echinus profile associated with the incoming Greek Revival style. Most of the rest of the exterior trim, however, is in the Federal style.

The windows on the front and gable-end facades have the proportions of 6/9-sash, but most contain 2/2s dating to the late 19th- or early 20th centuries. The nine windows on the main façade are aligned one above the other. The west gable-end fenestration consists of one window at each story (including attic) centered under the gable peak. All have projecting plank frames of the "jamb superior" type except for the three windows of the southeast chamber, which were replaced in the 20th century with 6/6 windows in flat casings. The other first-story windows have molded crowns; the frames of the second-story façade windows abut the front cornice.

Other architectural detailing on the main house includes narrow cornerboards and a wide water table above the foundation. The center entry was updated at least twice: The full-length divided sidelights date to the Greek Revival era, and may have been part of renovations made in 1840-41. The door, which has five panels and heavy applied moldings, may be contemporaneous with the wide Italianate hood supported on elaborate, incised brackets, dating to the 1870s or 1880s. One notable feature of the front entry is the large granite millstone that functions as the door stone.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

The east end of the main house has the same fenestration pattern as the west end except for an additional 2/2 window at the first story. A shed-roofed porch spans the east wall at the first story, continuing north along the main east wall of the northeast ell. Typical of the very late 19th- or the early years of the 20th century, the porch has turned posts and saw-cut "S" brackets.

The two sections of the **northeast ell** may have been built at different times. The similarity of their construction, however, suggests that they were more likely to have been part of the same building campaign, probably in the mid-19th century. The larger south part of the ell was built for a kitchen and the north for a sink room. The south part is two stories, and about as wide as the east room of the main house, which was probably the original kitchen the ell replaced. The rear sink room is narrower, and one story in height. The gabled roofs of both sections are oriented perpendicular to the house roof. In the south part of the east elevation of the ell, which is flush with the east wall of the main house, is a large four-panel door that may have been a former front door. Narrow Federal style moldings trim the edges of the panels. Long rectangular lights take the place of the top two panels, and the door surround consists of a wide flat casing. North of the door is a 2/2 window, also with a plain, flat casing. Another 2/2 window is centered in the east wall of the north part of the ell.

In contrast to the Federal door on the east side of the main ell, a door in the west side of the north section is a Greek Revival type, with two long recessed panels. There is a 1/1 window in the rear wall of the one-story part of the ell. A 6/9 window centered under the north gable peak of the main part of the ell is the only window surviving sash in the house that may date to the 1827 rebuilding.

The long shed-roofed section across most of the back of the house was built about 1960 to house a kitchen and bathroom, replacing a leanto and attached line of sheds that extended west toward the old barn (demolished). The rear wall of this section has irregular fenestration, including a 9-light over 2-panel door, and a paired 3/3 window toward the west end. A 2/2 window is located in the west end of this section. There is an entry in the south front of the jet by with a panel and glass door identical to that on the rear.

Framing and foundation

The main house has a post-and-beam frame of pine and oak that appears to consist of a combination of portions of the original 18th-century house frame, additional timbers dating to the ca. 1827 rebuilding, and a number of re-used, relocated timbers of unknown age and origin. The **roof framing** is of the single-purlin type, with a 5-sided hewn ridge beam and two sets of upper and lower square rafters with ends tapered into mortises in a heavy hewn purlin set midway up the roof slope. Falling braces support the roof corners, and short diagonal struts span between the center of each purlin and the summer beam below. The presence of forged nails throughout the attic suggests that at least part of the frame and flooring here predates 1800.

The direction of the **summer beams** is unusual for the Concord area. All three sets are transverse (running front to back), rather than alternating between transverse and longitudinal (from chimney girt to end wall) as was prevalent in this part of Middlesex County.

There is a full-height **cellar** under both the main house and the inner northeast ell. The massive mortared fieldstone chimney base extends several feet north of the main rear wall of the house into what is now a crawl space beneath the ca. 1960 kitchen. Such a chimney configuration indicates that there was a rear hearth in an earlier leanto kitchen, and that the leanto probably predated the northeast kitchen ell.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

The front sill of the northeast ell is butted against the rear face of the original main house sill. Like the main cellar, the ell cellar is full-height. A deep, narrow fieldstone well is located in this part of the cellar. Against the back foundation wall, associated with the well, is a mortared stone shelf that supports an early-20th century Gould pump.

Interior

Like the house exterior and the timber frame, the finish of the house interior displays elements of more than one stylistic period. The earliest features are consistent with the middle of the 18th century. Among them are the planed board paneling and the stair rail with simple, square newel posts on the turning stair of the lobby entrance. Several relocated joists are decorated with a delicate "sponge" painted design.

Most of the detailing on the interior, however, is in the Federal mode, with woodwork fastened with a type of cut nails that came into use about 1815. The outer corner posts protrude into the rooms and are plainly boxed, as are the lower edges of the second-story plates and girts. (The plaster ceilings and beam casings of the two first-story rooms were removed in the 20th century.) The window surrounds of both the southwest first-story room and the chamber above it have splayed jambs. The jamb trim boards have the type of narrow, incised bead detail characteristic of the Federal period. The windows of the southwest first-story room (the original parlor) have mitered casings trimmed with an ogee band molding. That room is ringed with a chair rail with a similar molding below it.

Early in the 20th century a bake oven was removed from the fireplace of the main southeast room, indicating that the room had been used as a kitchen. A wrought iron crane hook remains embedded in the jamb of this fireplace. Further evidence that this room was a kitchen is found in the marks remaining from the partition walls and wall shelving of what was apparently a pantry set into the northeast part of the room.

All of the interior doors in the main house are a transitional late Federal type, with four panels recessed on one side, and with a very slightly raised field on the other. All of those doors have porcelain knobs rather than latches, and two-part butt hinges. A well-preserved grained finish remains on the back of one door.

Landscape and setting

The Wheeler-Harrington House sits on over 15 acres of open, sloping land above the south side of the Assabet River. The western third of the property, which is leased for agriculture to the abutting farmer, is currently a combination of tillage and meadow. Just west of the house are a few remaining apple trees from a mid- or early 20th-century orchard. Most of the north and east part of the acreage is wooded; behind the house the land descends gradually to swampy terrain along the river. One lingering feature of the southeast corner of the property is a natural spring traditionally called Harrington's Spring. This may be the "Harrington's Hole" referred to by Henry David Thoreau's in his mid-19th century journals.

Archaeological potential

Josiah Wheeler's profession as a bricklayer may have entailed the making of bricks as well as brick masonry. Large-dimension hearth bricks have been found in the cellar and at various locations on the grounds. In addition, many fragments of redware have surfaced where the ground has been disturbed, suggesting that Josiah may have fired pottery as well as bricks on his property.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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 form updates and expands upon the Form B written in 1988 by Anne Forbes.

Wheeler family ownership ca. 1740s to 1826

The presence of 18th-century architectural elements including nails, lath, and other surviving early technical and stylistic features supports the longtime understanding that this house was built for farmer and bricklayer **Josiah Wheeler** (1718-1768), probably a few years after his 1741 marriage to Mary Lee. The Wheelers had nine children, all of whom were living when Josiah wrote his will shortly before his death at age 50 in 1768. He bequeathed five or six pounds "lawful money" to each of the children, and left his dwelling house and farm on the North River to his wife. Mary Wheeler lived until 1799. According to the US census of 1790, her household then included one male and four females over the age of 16, so it is reasonable to conclude that several of the children remained in the house long after they reached adulthood.

Future research may reveal more about the Wheeler decades of ownership and how the house and farm ultimately came into the hands of a relative, **Noah Wheeler, Jr.** As far as is known, Noah Wheeler, Jr. did not live on the farm, and it is likely that he leased the property to tenants. He was born in 1778 at Nine Acre Corner, and ultimately came into the ownership of his father's house and farm at 350 Fitchburg Turnpike (CON.422.) That property was one of the primary homesteads of the large Wheeler family of Concord, which descended over three centuries from several of Concord's earliest settlers. Over the 17th and first half of the 18th century many Wheeler households populated the "South Quarter", the large section of town extending south and west of the town center to the Sudbury line. Within the South Quarter, Wheeler farms were established primarily at Nine Acre Corner and along the regional roads leading to Sudbury and Marlborough. This 18th-century farm, located west of the Marlborough road, was apparently the westernmost of the Wheeler properties. Historic maps indicate that as late as the 1870s its farmstead was still the most isolated of any in all of Concord.

Joseph Harrington ownership 1827 to 1877

Joseph Harrington, Jr. (1795-1877), who bought the farm from Noah Wheeler, Jr. in 1827, was a descendant of another old colonial family, whose progenitors included Lockes and Russells. The son of Joseph and Lucy (Russell) Harrington, he had grown up in Lexington. In 1821 he married Mary Snow of Westford, and they had two daughters, Mary (1821-1835), and Lucy, born in Concord in 1829.

Joseph and Mary may have leased the farm from Noah Wheeler, Jr. for several years before they bought it. They were married in Concord, and the April 1827 purchase deed for the farm refers to their existing residence as Concord rather than Lexington. According to local tax records there was a new barn on the 104-acre farm in 1827. At that time the property was described as 70 improved acres (i.e. cleared farmland), and 34 acres unimproved.

The Harrington farm in the second quarter of the 19th century appears to have been fairly typical for its time, with a small assortment of livestock, fields planted to hay and an assortment of grains, and a few acres of potatoes and beans. The Harringtons were not just scraping by, however. As early as 1837 Joseph owned a horse and a chaise, and he was among the minority of Concord's farmers who had a personal estate high enough to show up on the tax records. Those monetary assets were valued at \$100 in 1837, and rose to \$645 in 1838. After the Fitchburg Railroad was built in the mid-1840s, Joseph even owned some railroad stock. He continued to expand his livestock, and by 1841 he owned four oxen, along with seven cows and two pigs.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

While Joseph Harrington's oxen eased the farm work, in contrast to Josiah Wheeler he never had a large family that included the grown sons or sons-in-law once deemed necessary to the management of a hundred-acre New England farm. He and his wife had only two children, and their older daughter died at 14 in 1835. Mary Harrington died in 1846 at the age of 55. For the next thirty years Joseph carried on the farm alone with the help of their younger daughter Lucy (1829-1907), who undoubtedly grew into all the roles traditionally performed by a farm wife. Census information indicates that in most years there was only one farmhand in the Harrington household. In 1850 it was laborer Isaiah Nealy, age 19; in 1860 it was 21 year-old Albert Conant. In 1870, when Joseph Harrington was 75 years old, there was still only one young farm laborer boarding with the family, Samuel Ward. By then, however, there was also a live-in domestic servant. 35 year-old Nancy Fitzpatrick, like so many household servants in Concord in the 1870s, had been born in Ireland.

Lucy Harrington ownership 1877 to 1907

Joseph Harrington died in 1877 at the age of 82. In his later years he had reduced his livestock to a horse and one cow, but he still operated the farm with the help of his daughter and a farmhand or two. The property he left to Lucy upon his death was 111 acres with a house, barn, and shed. Over the next thirty years, Lucy Harrington was one of a handful of women who ran Concord farms in the post-Civil War era. The 1880 agricultural census reveals that she had an active agricultural business. She owned a horse, a cow, 30 chickens, and a 100-acre farm with a value of \$4,000. 25 tons of hay were grown on 50 acres of the Harrington farm in that year. Lucy sold \$450 in farm products, \$260 of which came from market produce. A few acres produced corn and potatoes, and the trees on the property provided eight cords of commercial firewood - an important agricultural product of the time. Lucy's expenses included \$100 paid to farmhands for nine weeks of labor. Beginning in 1896 she also presumably received rental income from a small cottage built that year on the opposite side of the lane to the farmhouse (204 Harrington Avenue, CON.278).

In contrast to the series of young farmhands her father had employed over the years, Lucy's two principal employees stayed with her for decades. Brothers William and Francis ("Frank") Chamberlain were both listed as farmers and boarders at the Harrington Farm as early as 1886, and William was living there as early as 1880. The Chamberlains were born in Acton - William in 1829 and Francis in 1834. In most years between 1880 and 1907 there were six or seven cows on the farm, all owned by Francis Chamberlain. Also during most of that time William owned a horse, and both Francis and Lucy kept chickens.

In February 1907, during a week in which the *Concord Enterprise* reported that influenza was "having full swing", both Lucy and William died of the disease within a day of each other. Both were 77 years old. Francis Chamberlain, who reported both deaths, subsequently bought a small house nearby on Hayward Court, where he died in 1910.

Lapham ownership 1912 to 1924

Lucy Harrington left no will, and the farm, along with a substantial personal estate of nearly \$19,000, passed to five cousins who lived outside of Concord. In May 1912 the Harrington heirs sold the property to **Waldo P. Lapham**. Waldo and his brother C. Daniel Lapham were sons of Edward Everett Lapham, a former watchman at the Concord Reformatory. Their parents and two other brothers had moved to Carlisle in 1903, where their father invested in real estate during his retirement years. Waldo and Daniel, both of whom were first listed in censuses and directories as brick- and stone masons, stayed in West Concord, where Daniel also worked as a plasterer. Waldo was soon listing his profession as a contractor and, like his father, became heavily involved in real estate development. By the time he bought the farm he owned several rental houses and a business block near the foot of Commonwealth Avenue at Concord Junction.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

Shortly before World War I, Waldo embarked on another ambitious development project, this time on the old Wheeler/Harrington Farm. In 1913 he divided the land into 34 lots on both sides of the old road that ultimately became Harrington Avenue. Although the lane from Marlborough Road to the Harrington farmstead had been classified at one time as a town road, by the beginning of the 20th century the "Harrington Road" had long since reverted to a private way. The old road still ended at the farmstead, west of which was a well-worn cart path to Main Street (Route 62). Waldo Lapham soon improved the former Harrington Road, and it was accepted by the town as Harrington Avenue in 1929.

Some of the lots on the north side were sold immediately. The Wheeler/Harrington farmstead was on the 6.33-acre Lot #32, which was bought, together with 5.25-acre Lot #33 to its east, by **Edgar L. Willard** in October 1913. In September 1915, Willard sold both lots to Waldo Lapham's brother Daniel. **C. Daniel Lapham**, with his wife Eva and young son, moved into the old farmhouse, where they lived for nine years. Two more sons were born to them there before 1920. Daniel continued to work as a mason and plasterer, and it does not appear that he and his wife farmed the land, although they may have planted some apple trees. The Laphams made several improvements to the house, including installing electricity and plumbing. It was probably they who set up the pump in the cellar to bring water up to the kitchen and a new bathroom in the rear part of the ell.

LeBallister ownership 1924 to 1974

In 1924 Daniel Lapham sold the 11.6- acre double lot to **Theresa and Ralph LeBallister**. The LeBallisters were mother and son. Mrs. LeBallister was the widow of Charles LeBallister. The 1924 Concord Directory lists Ralph, then in his twenties, as a clerk, but by 1930 he was working as a carpenter at the American Powder Mills. The powder mills were located on a large acreage that straddled the boundaries of Maynard, Acton, and Concord. Sometime in the 1930s Ralph joined the Concord Woodworking Company, where he was a foreman by 1941. The company, founded by Kennan Damon, was located in the old Damon Mill at nearby Westvale (CON.479, NR-Ind), where it manufactured garden furniture.

Over the years Ralph LeBallister, who began to be listed in directories as a real estate agent, bought back some of the lots that Waldo Lapham had divided out of the old farm, including some on the south side of Harrington Avenue.

Ralph LeBallister was married about 1940. His mother died in 1950 at the age of 76, and Ralph became sole owner of the property. In the early 1960s Ralph and his wife Mildred tore down the old rear leanto and line of sheds and replaced them with the present one-story addition for a kitchen, bathroom and utility room. They also installed a hot-air heating system, with a furnace in the new addition. For many years in the mid-20th century the LeBallisters boarded and raised horses on their reduced portion of the old farm, using much of the land as pasture.

In 1970 Ralph LeBallister transferred a half-interest in the remaining acres of the old farm to his son David C. LeBallister. In 1973 the family put the property up for sale. Real estate developers acquired most of the lots that Waldo Lapham had laid out on the south side of the road, while a coalition of volunteer groups worked to persuade the Town to buy the farmstead and land along the river on the north side. With help from a government grant, in 1974 the town of Concord purchased 15.6 acres of the old Wheeler/Harrington Farm, including the rundown farmhouse, to become **Harrington Park**. The principal purpose was to preserve open land for conservation, and town staff began preparations to tear down the house.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CONCORD

249 Harrington Avenue

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

Town of Concord ownership 1974 to present

A grass-roots group of citizens approached the Concord Historical Commission, who secured a delay in the scheduled demolition of the house. In 1975, having gained supporters such as the Louisa May Alcott Women's Society, the group succeeded in passing a Town Meeting appropriation of \$6,800 to stabilize the building – an arrangement that included a promised 619 hours of volunteer labor. Over the summer, local volunteers logged 649 documented hours, and Robert and Becky McCall, the first tenant/caretakers, moved in with their family later in the year.

In 1977 Town Meeting established a revolving fund for the upkeep of the house. Since that time the rental income from a succession of four sets of tenants, administered by the Historical Commission, has provided for the maintenance of the property, assisted by the devoted care of the tenant/caretakers themselves.

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CON.277



249 Harrington Avenue. Aerial view



249 Harrington Avenue. East side

	CON.277
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249 Harrington Ave.: West gable end and façade



249 Harrington Ave. West gable end

	CON.277
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249 Harrington Ave.: rear view



249 Harrington Ave.: Façade with front door hood, door stone, east windows



249 Harrington Ave.: Well in rear cellar.



249 Harrington Ave.: East room, first story, looking southeast

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Community Property Address
CONCORD 249 HARRINGTON AVENUE

Area(s) Form No.

CON.277

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district

☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Anne Forbes, 2011

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Wheeler-Harrington House is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C.

Under Criterion A, the property represents an unbroken connection to the rural, agrarian life of the west part of Concord for over 2 ½ centuries. Its early association with the large Wheeler family who populated and developed much of the old South Quarter lasted for at least two generations – first with the original household of farmer and bricklayer Josiah Wheeler, and later with farmer-tenants under Noah Wheeler, Jr. For fifty years under the ownership of Joseph Harrington the farm typified the well-managed general farm of his era, and the house was part of the most outlying farmstead in the southwest part of Concord. The property's social and agricultural significance was enhanced in the next generation by the 30-year ownership and management of Joseph's daughter, Lucy Harrington, one of only a few female farmers in Concord after the Civil War.

The property is also one of Concord's best representatives of several important 20th-century development trends. Before World War I, as the west part of Concord was undergoing rapid growth, small-time developer Waldo Lapham subdivided the old farm while maintaining open land around the farmstead and preserving its relationship to the Assabet River. Through the middle of the century under the LeBallister family, the reduced acreage was readapted as a horse farm. Finally, in the midst of the development pressures of the 1970s, the house and 15+ surrounding acres were preserved in perpetuity by the people of Concord.

The Wheeler-Harrington House is eligible under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of a comfortable, though modest, center-chimney Federal dwelling retaining portions of its earlier colonial core and frame, while also displaying stylish features of the later Victorian era. In spite of the residential development of West Concord along the nearby Route 62 corridor, the house is still in its natural setting of open meadows, gardens and fields overlooking the Assabet River.

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Sect A
USGS map

AREA

CON. 277

FORM NO.

280

277

West Concord

Address 249 Harrington Av.

Historic Name Wheeler/Harrington

House

Use: Present Residential/museum

Original Residential

DESCRIPTION

Probably 1740's, with later additions

Source structural evidence; SPNEA rept.

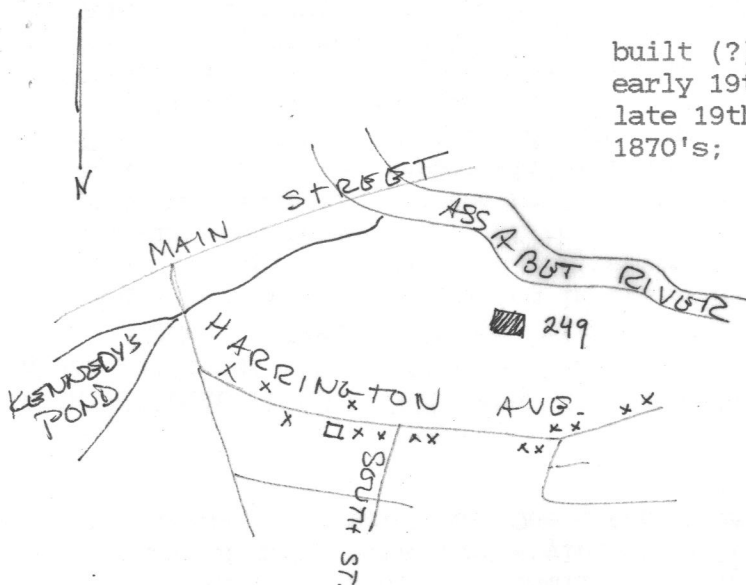
Style Georgian-Italianate vernacular

Architect NA

Exterior Wall Fabric wood clapboard

Outbuildings none

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



built (?) and 2-story ell, shed at NE corner added--early 19th century; NW 1-story ell--c. 1955; veranda--late 19th C.; window sash, front entry door--ca. 1870's;

Major Alterations (with dates) of re-

Condition chimney rebuilt--1930's

good

Moved no Date NA

Acreage 15 acres

Setting an open hillside above the Assabet, on remains of 18th C. farm; backed by apple trees. Faces a residential neighborhood of mixed, (primarily 20th century,) date

UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

Recorded by A. Forbes

Organization for Concord Hist. Comm.

Date 6/10/88

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

As the only farmhouse in West Concord not surrounded by later development, the Wheeler/Harrington House remains as part of the agrarian/riverfront landscape that personified most of West Concord until the end of the nineteenth century. Its association with three prominent local families, with a vanished local farming tradition, and its mixture of four vernacular styles of architecture--the rural Georgian, Greek Revival, Italianate, and vernacular Queen Anne--render it eligible under Criteria A, B, and C.

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

This 2 1/2-story, 5-bay, pitch-roofed, Georgian vernacular, or "Second Period" house displays 18th-century origins in its central chimney, fieldstone foundation, and heavy timber frame. It owes much of its visual character, however, to alterations, (and perhaps some reassembly,) of the 1830's and '70's. The ca. 1830's changes include the possible rebuilding of the roof to its present, somewhat shallow pitch, and much of the exterior trim--the molded window lintels, water table, and echinus-molded, boxed cornice. The northeast kitchen ell and shed also date from the first third of the 19th century.

The 1870's alterations include 2-over-2 sash fenestration, and the Italianate door canopy, supported on elaborately incised scroll brackets. The front entry, with its 6-paneled door and divided sidelights, probably dates from about the same time. The veranda, occupying an unusual position along the east side of the house, is vernacular Queen Anne in style, with turned columns and delicate S-shaped brackets, and would have been added late in the century. The present northwest kitchen ell was built ca. 1955.

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

Although other 18th- and early 19th-century West Concord houses are more stylish, the Wheeler/Harrington House is the only farmhouse that remains in its original setting. On the crest of an open hill, with the Assabet River at its back, flanked by the remains of the Harrington orchards, it still appears to be an isolated farmstead. It did stand nearly alone on Harrington Av., (the road, coming west from Old Marlborough Rd, ended at the house,) until well into the 20th century. The character of the scene is enhanced by the mixture of styles in the building's ornament, which gives visible, tangible form to the farm's long evolution.

The house is notable for its association with two of Concord's original English families--the Wheelers and the Hosmers, and with the family of Joseph Lee, an 18th-century doctor. Probably built shortly after the 1742 marriage of bricklayer Josiah Wheeler, (son of John and Dorothy Hosmer Wheeler,) and Joseph Lee's daughter, Mary, the house remained in the Wheeler family until it was sold to Joseph Harrington in 1827. Joseph Harrington enlarged the property and farmed the land for most of the rest of the century.

Fenn, Mary. Old Houses of Concord. Concord: 1974.

Snelling, John, & Assoc.s Plan of Land in Concord, Mass.. July, 1973.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Society for the Preservation of N. E. Antiquities. The Wheeler/Harrington House, Concord, MA. 1980.

Wheeler, Ruth. File of Houses in Concord. Unpublished; Concord.

Interviews with tenant, Peter Benes, 1988.

MHC INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MHC Inventory scanning project, 2008-2012

MACRIS No. CON. 277





CON. 277

117

2. Town Concord (west)
 Street 249 Harrington Ave
 Name _____
 Original Use _____
 Present Use _____
 Present Owner Tommy Concord
 Date 18HC Style _____
 Source of Date _____
 Architect _____

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered _____

IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: _____

WALL COVER: Wood clapboard Brick Stone Other _____

STORIES: 1 2 | 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency _____ Simple/Complex

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony 2. side Recessed _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

FACADE: Gable End: Front Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament

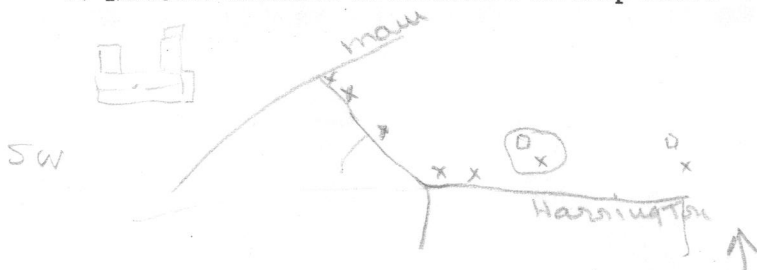
Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: _____

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied _____

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured cornerboards

OUTBUILDINGS _____ LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below 6. Footage of structure from street 125
 Property has _____ feet frontage on street



Recorder _____

For _____

Photo Polaroid E-09-065-1-117

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)

FOR USE WITH IMPORTANT STRUCTURES (Indicate any interior features of note)

Fireplace _____

Stairway _____

Other _____

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

REFERENCE (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Owner: _____

Deed Information: Book Number _____ Page _____, _____ Registry of Deeds

Original yellow form: Eligibility file
 Copies: Inventory form
 Town file(w/corresp.)
 Macris
 NR director _____

Community: Concord

MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Date Received: 8 Jun 11

Date Reviewed: 27 Jun 11

Type: ☒ Individual

☐ District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name: Wheeler-Harrington House

Inventory Form: CON. 277

Address: 249 Harrington Avenue

Requested by: Anne Forbes

Action: ☐ Honor ☐ ITC

☐ Grant

☐ R & C

☐ Other:

Agency:

Staff in charge of Review:

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

☒ Eligible

☐ Eligible, also in district

☐ Eligible only in district

☐ Ineligible

☐ More information needed

DISTRICTS

☐ Eligible

☐ Ineligible

☐ More information needed

CRITERIA:

☒ A

☐ B

☒ C

☐ D

LEVEL:

☒ Local

☐ State

☐ National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Phil Bergen

Originally eval'd 2006; more information requested.

A mid 18th century farmstead, altered several times, including major alterations 1826, 1840s, 1960. Fifteen-acre property owned by town and maintained as preserved space on banks of Assabet River.

1820s alterations speak more to Federal period rebuilding, but there are original, mid 18th century remnants that make this an unusual survivor in a developed neighborhood. Two story, center chimney (unusual for period in Concord).

Originally built for farmer and brick-maker Josiah Wheeler, it was sold to Joseph Harrington in 1827 and greatly remodeled. At one time property consisted of 104 acres. A large barn was built in 1820s (no longer extant), and usual crops and livestock maintained. Early 20th century divestment subdivided property, and 15 acres maintained for the house. Town of Concord purchased in 1974 as conservation property, grassroots group and town meeting preserved house which is tenanted.