

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	CON.262
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Johnson's, Howard Restaurant
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	768 Elm St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Concord
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	
<b>Local No:</b>	E8-1898
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1938
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Leard Brothers; Morgan, Joseph G.
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Colonial Revival; Not researched
<b>Use(s):</b>	Restaurant
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Commerce; Transportation
<b>Area(s):</b>	
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Metal, Undetermined Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Stone, Uncut Foundation: Concrete Unspecified



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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## FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

E8-1898

CONCORD

262

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

CONCORD

Town

SENT A



Neighborhood or village)

768 Elm Street

Howard Johnson's Restaurant

restaurant

1938

Construction

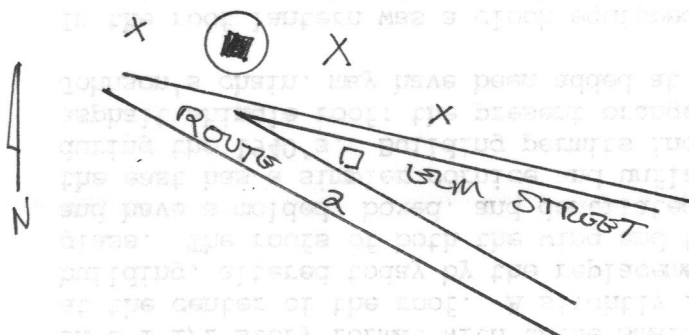
Building permit records

Colonial Revival

Joseph Morgan, archt.  
Leard Bros., builders

## 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.



Anne Forbes

Recorded by for Concord Hist. Commission

Organization June, 1992

Date (month/day/year)

## Exterior Material:

Foundation concrete

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof metal tile

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

## Major Alterations (with dates)

Ca. 1940's: metal tile roof, east wing added; late 20th C: 1-S. concrete and brick addition; center and west facades altered by plate glass windows and doors.

Condition fair

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date N/A

Acreage 4.9 acres

Setting Back from road in asphalt parking lot, facing intersection of Rte. 2 and Elm St. Ca. 1960's motel to east; small renovated (ca. 1980) office building to west.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

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

Although altered, this building is a significant example of late-1930's Colonial Revival architecture as utilized by the Howard Johnson Restaurant chain. It was designed, as were other Howard Johnsons of the time, by architect Joseph G. Morgan in a 1 1/2-story format with three small facade dormers and a tall octagonal lantern at the center of the roof. A slightly lower west wing is evidently original to the building, altered today by the replacement of its front and side wall with plate glass. The roofs of both the wing and the main building are flared at the eaves, and have a molded, boxed, and dentilated front cornice. A second wing extending to the east has a simpler cornice and unflared eaves; it may have been added some time during the 1940's. Building permits indicate that the restaurant originally had an asphalt shingle roof; the present orange metal-tile roof, a trademark of the Howard Johnson's chain, may have been added at about the time that the east wing was built.

In the roof lantern was a clock equipped with a flashing light to attract night time motorists. Details of the building played up Concord's historic location. A light fixture at the entrance was a reproduction of Paul Revere's lantern, and on the interior, parchment lampshades were decorated with scenes of local interest. (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.*

Although one of Concord's later significant resources, the 1938 Howard Johnson's restaurant is extremely important as an example of roadside restaurant architecture of the 1930's. Before it closed in the spring of 1992 it was the last operating of all the pre-war Colonial Revival Howard Johnson's in the United States. Howard Johnson, who opened his first restaurants in the mid-1920's, was a pioneer in developing the concept of a franchise of restaurants that catered to the auto traveler. Johnson used the idea of design consistency to create buildings which, by their Colonial Revival architecture and details such as the roof lantern and weathervane would be instantly recognizable to the public. By extension, a common design among the Howard Johnson Restaurants also implied that the restaurant fare, service, and atmosphere would be consistent from one Howard Johnson's restaurant to another, offering a welcome predictability to early automobile travelers.

The site of the Concord restaurant at the intersection of Elm Street and the recently-completed Concord By-pass highway (Concord Turnpike; later Route 2,) was thus an ideal location for the type of restaurant that Howard Johnson envisioned. The franchise here was owned by the Le Cress Corporation, which opened the ice cream parlor and restaurant here in the summer or fall of 1938. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Town Building Permit records.  
Interview with Arthur Krim, 6/1/92.  
Concord Enterprise, 7/14/38.

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

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

CONCORD

Howard Johnson's  
Restaurant

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s) Form No.  
262

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Some time after 1955 the central and western portions of the facade were replaced with glass and fronted with shallow wooden terracing and a pergola-like porch, and a large concrete and brick extension was built across the rear of the building, extending out beyond the ends of the wings. In spite of these changes, however, many of the building's characteristic Howard Johnson's features have remained intact until the present time. The east wing retains its massive exterior stone end chimney, and evidently its original tripartite facade windows--a 6-over-6-sash flanked by 4-over-4's. The roof lantern is also intact, and is still topped by a weathervane in the shape of the Howard Johnson's logo of chef, boy, and dog. Some of the interior pine paneling remains in the east wing.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

The first managers were H.G. Cressinger and A.E. Liesch, and the staff was largely composed of Concord residents. A later owner for many years was Robert Parks.

Howard Johnson died in the early 1970's, and the company was managed for several years by his son. In the 1980's the ownership of the chain was broken up, and the restaurants sold to the Marriott Corporation and the British Imperial Group. In recent years the Concord restaurant acquired about two dozen of the original captain's chairs from the 1935-36 Howard Johnson's in Portsmouth, NH, which burned in 1983. The restaurant finally closed in 1992, and is presently undergoing extensive renovation to prepare for its conversion to an Italian restaurant.



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town

Property Address

Concord

763 Elm St.

Area(s)

Form No.

CON 262

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
 DIVISION OF INSPECTION  
 PLAN RECORD

CASE RACK APART. NO. alter. BUILDING Howard Johnson Restaurant  
 CITY OR TOWN Concord STORIES 1  
 TO BE USED FOR dining purposes STREET Elm  
 OWNER H. G. Cressingen CLASS  
 ARCHITECT Joseph G. Morgan  
 CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED  
 DATE 4/9/40  
 INSPECTOR Beyer

Form BU. 1-2m-1-'38. No. 2788

