

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.	Form no.
	24-C

1. Town Worcester

Address 158 Holden Street

Name Smith-Thaxter-Merrifield House

Present use children's home

~~Worcester Children's~~
Present owner Friend Society

3. Description: pre-1741, alterations late
Date 18th century?

Source see reverse #9

Style timber-frame vernacular

Architect probably none

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features center-entrance
opening facade, large central

chimney, dentilled door frame,
hip roof

Altered roof? Date late 18th-early 19th century

Moved no Date

5. Lot size: Assessors' Book 49, p.28
Lot 20 62,404 sq.ft.

One acre or less Over one acre X

Approximate frontage 200'

Approximate distance of building from street

6. Recorded by W. & M. Seaman ed.
B.R. Pfeiffer

Organization Worc. Heritage Pres. Soc.

Date December 1977

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form
Photo number

Roll 17

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.

UTM: 19/267680/4688120

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Elisha Smith II

Original use farmhouse

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates institutional residence after 1946

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	☐	Conservation	☐	Recreation	☐
Agricultural	☐	Education	☐	Religion	☐
Architectural	☒	Exploration/ settlement	☒	Science/ invention	☐
The Arts	☐	Industry	☐	Social/ humanitarian	☐
Commerce	☐	Military	☐	Transportation	☐
Communication	☐	Political	☐		
Community development	☐				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Known locally as the Merrifield House, 158 Holden Street is among Worcester's oldest buildings and is an excellent example of eighteenth-century vernacular architecture. Of timber-frame construction, the house has a nearly square floor plan with a massive central chimney rising through the center of the structure's hip roof. The facade (south) is symmetrical, consisting of a center entry flanked on each side by two windows (1st storey) and five windows (2d storey). The facade entry consists of an elaborate twelve-panel door (perhaps a replacement copy of the original) set between thin pilasters which support a dentilled cap. Once a common building type in Worcester, central-chimney hip-roofed houses are now rare, with only three examples extant. In its present form the Merrifield House may be the product of a late eighteenth-century renovation in which the original structure was enlarged and both the hip roof and front entry were added. More recent alterations are limited to the replacement of original sash, perhaps in the early twentieth century.

The most likely first owner of 158 Holden Street is Elisha Smith II, a native of Weston who settled in Worcester near North Pond prior to the birth of his daughter, Mary, in 1741. Between 1775 and 1792 the house was sold to Benjamin Thaxter, who occupied the house in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to an 1890 history by Caleb Wall, the house was purchased by Deacon Alpheus Merrifield around 1849 for his son, Francis Merrifield, who operated a farm here. In 1866 the farm and house were sold to James Libby, whose heirs owned the

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)
- property until ca.1915 when it was sold to the Norton Company which later gave it to the present owner.

Worcester Historical Society. Organization file.

Wall, C. "Map of Worcester's Earliest Settlers" (1877)

Nutt, C. History of Worcester, vol. I, p.160 (photo - "House at North Worcester")

Spears, J. Old Landmarks and Historical Spots, (1931) p.145.

Wall, Caleb. North Worcester: Its First Settlers and Old Farms. (1890), p.145.

MAR 5 1980

Property Worcester Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)

State MA (Worcester) Working Number 8.30.79.2060

TECHNICAL

Photos 383 + 13
Maps 2, 63

CONTROL

Excellent multiple resource nomination for the entire city of Worcester. Both the general description & statement of significance & the individual inventory sheets are well done. Each type of property included is well justified & reasons are listed for not including others at this time (e.g. 3-deckers). ^{Historian} Call/Accept
^{Lightner} 10-30-79
opposition is high. Minor problems with some properties are listed on attached sheets.

Concur with Bruce's comments on 102-L-3, 116-CBD-11, 117-E, and 130-CBD-50 and 44. Integrity and/or boundaries need to be addressed specifically on individual forms. ^{Architectural Historian} DOUBLE

ARCHEOLOGIST

116-CBD-11 - Destroyed, cannot be listed.
130-CBD-44 - I am not convinced this has lost integrity. See attached.
102-L-3 - Period of significance and categorization of 1 bldg need to be discussed with State.

With 3 exceptions all properties appear to me to meet the criteria and the forms are adequate. ~~Both~~ ^{Both} technically and to determine significance. Although some of the forms did not contain strong statements of significance the resource categories were thoroughly discussed in the body of the nomination; therefore significance was established. VBDs were not necessary because

OTHER

ACCEPT
MACDONALD
2/28/80

of the scale maps and clearly delineated boundaries. PLEESKE was missing on some properties but is now included after the 2/11/corrections.

HAER

The only properties that I do not recommend listing are

Inventory _____

- ✓ 116-CBD-13 - DESTROYED BY FIRE MD - 116 CBD-11
- 130-CBD-44 - DOES NOT RETAIN INTEGRITY FOR INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

Review _____

- ✓ 102-L-3 I ~~am not~~ ^{am not} convinced about boundaries

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BUT BELIEVE THEY COULD BE OK. ~~BASED~~

ON ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED - I DEFER JUDGEMENT.

Recommend Listing all properties ~~except~~ ^{now} these 3. Return 116-CBD-11 to State (not eligible); ~~to discuss further~~ ^{to discuss further} w/NR staff + State. ^{DOUBLE} 3/3/80

BRANCH CHIEF

Return 102-L-3 to State for correction;

HOLD 130-CBD-44 for info from State

Staff conference 3/5/80 - agreed to action as noted below:

KEEPER

Accept with exception of 116-CBD-11 (official notification of fire & demo from State), 102-L-3 (returning to State for revision - also returning 116-CBD-11) and 130-CBD-44 (filing from State)

Soldner
3/5/80

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered _____

MAR 5 1980

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit _____



Prestige Prints
by Berkeley

JAN 1978

Prestige Prints
by Berkeley

Z4-C
MAR 5 1980

158 Holden St.

Smith-Thaxter-Morifield House

West + south elevat-

Warcester, MA, Ma
ians

80 AUG 1979

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000304