

PH0355330

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 19 1977

DATE ENTERED

NOV 9 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC



Whitcomb House

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

51 Harvard Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Worcester

VICINITY OF

3

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Massachusetts

025

Worcester

027

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

X PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

X OTHER: Home for
the Blind

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Memorial Homes for the Blind Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

51 Harvard Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Worcester

VICINITY OF

Massachusetts 01608

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Worcester County Courthouse, Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

2 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Worcester,

Massachusetts 01608

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE

1973

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Boston

Massachusetts 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

— EXCELLENT
X GOOD
— FAIR

— DETERIORATED
— RUINS
— UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

X UNALTERED
— ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE
— MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Whitcomb House, built between 1879 and 1880, is an asymmetrical, polychromatic, high Victorian mansion. It is a three-story granite structure, with a picturesque roofline composed of numerous shingled dormers. The house measures forty feet by seventy feet and is adjoined by several porches, verandas and a conservatory. It is located at the corner of Highland and Harvard Streets and surrounded on the north and east sides by a low stone fence.

The facade of the house is composed of three vertical planes. It is dominated by a three-story, central gabled wing. The top of the wing, within the gable, is decorated with diaper work and framed at the roof's edge with a coping of light colored stone. The projecting central wing contains the house's main entrance. The entrance is reached by four steps which rise from the street level and is formed by a round arch, supported by two carved Gothic-style granite columns. The door itself is wooden, with a wood frame containing side lights and a lunette window. A second story balcony of ornamented cast iron rests on heavy carved stone brackets above the door, creating an entrance shelter.

The two-story sections of the house which flank the central wing are asymmetrical, but balanced. The left side is occupied by a porch on the first floor; on the right side there is a pair of small windows. At the second story, on the left there is a single window, set off center; on the right there is a double window. The stone surrounding the windows is lighter than the granite of the walls, creating the polychromatic effect. Dormer windows break the roofline of the flanking sections. The corners of the facade are rounded, with a three-story turret and conical slate roof on the right and a gently sloped, cut away corner on the left.

The interior of the house retains most of the original floor plan. The use of the rooms, however, has been altered to accommodate the needs of the Home for the Blind which occupies the house. Remnants of the original elegant interior details remain throughout the house. The formal rooms on the first floor are finished in cherry, oak, butternut and mahogany, and the walls and ceilings are covered with decorative painting. Tile, terracotta and marble are used in the trim around the fireplaces. The second floor rooms are finished in cherry, ash and maple.

Behind the house stands the stable and carriage house. It is a one-story rectangular building of local stone. A high hipped slate roof caps the building. The roof is trimmed along its ridge with a wooden lace-like decoration and finials at each end. At the center of the ridge is a wooden cupola with a pyramidal roof and weathervane. The facade of the carriage house is dominated by a large carriage door, located to the left of center. At the center of the facade at the second story rises a peaked dormer with a masonry front and arched opening for loading hay into the loft. The interior of the carriage house has been renovated for use as a workshop for the blind.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☒ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Whitcomb House is an architecturally and historically significant structure in the city of Worcester. It is a fine example of a high Victorian mansion and was the home of one of Worcester's most successful businessmen and generous philanthropists of the nineteenth century. The house was built in 1879-80 for George H. Whitcomb and was lived in by the Whitcomb family until 1918, when it was given to the Memorial Home for the Blind.

George H. Whitcomb was born in Templeton, Massachusetts in 1842. He was educated at Phillips Academy in Andover and Amherst College. After graduation from Amherst College, with capital supplied by his father, he founded Bay State Envelope Company. Bay State Envelope began as a small one-man company and grew into a large and profitable industry. By 1895 one third of all staple envelopes used in the United States were manufactured in Worcester. In 1898, having made a substantial fortune from the envelope industry, Whitcomb sold Bay State Envelope to U.S. Envelope Company. Whitcomb also amassed a considerable amount of money in real estate transactions in Colorado and Washington, as well as in Worcester.

In addition to the important role which George Whitcomb played in the economy of Worcester during the nineteenth century, he was also devoted to many charitable and educational interests. He was a trustee of Amherst, Mount Holyoke and Oberlin Colleges. He founded a scholarship at Amherst, erected and endowed Whitcomb Music Conservatory at Doane College, Crete, Nebraska and erected Whitcomb Chemical Laboratory at Drury College, Springfield, Ohio. Upon his death in 1918, his home was given to the Society for the Blind.

Architecturally the house is significant as one of the few remaining houses designed by the local architect Stephen C. Earle. Earle designed numerous churches and several public buildings in the Worcester area, but only several houses. The Whitcomb house is a fine example of the architect's residential work and home of a wealthy nineteenth century businessman.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nutt, Charles, History of Worcester and its People, Lewis Historical Pub. Co., New York, 1919, Vol. IV pp. 794-8
Worcester Society of Antiquity Proceedings, Roe, A.S. "Twenty Years of Harvard Street, 1896 pp. 297-8
Worcester Gazette, January 17, 1919 p. 10
Worcester, Massachusetts, Worcester County Commandery, K.T., 1895
Waite Papers, Albert Waite, in possession of American Antiquarian Society

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	19	2	6	18	9	10	10	4	6	18	3	4	1	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Andrea M. Gilmore
ORGANIZATION

DATE

Massachusetts Historical Commission
STREET & NUMBER

July 1976

TELEPHONE

294 Washington Street
CITY OR TOWN

617-727-8470

STATE

Boston

Massachusetts

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☐

STATE ☐

LOCAL ☒

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Reed Amador

TITLE Executive Officer Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE 1/10/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Wm. M. Smith

DATE

1/9/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST: Charles H. Smith

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 1-4-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Property Whitcomb House

77000653

State *Mass.*

Working Number 1-19-77-121

Worcester

TECHNICAL

Photos

Maps

UAM invest

4.26.77 CONTROL

HISTORIAN

accept
B. Grosvenor
4/20/77

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

accept
blovich
4.14.77

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
4-25-77

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Henry
11.5.77

National Register Write-up

Send-back _____

Entered NOV 9 1977

Federal Register Entry

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



Worcester Co.

Whitcomb House
Worcester, MA
Susan Ceccacci
1975

JAN 19 1977

Worcester Heritage Society
321 Main St., Worcester, MA
Facade of the Whitcomb House
Photo #1 72

NOV 9 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Worcester Co.

Whitcomb House
Worcester, MA
Susan Ceccacci
1975

JAN 19 1977

Worcester Heritage Society
321 Main St., Worcester, MA
Facade of the carriagehouse and stables
Photo #2 of 2

NOV 9 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

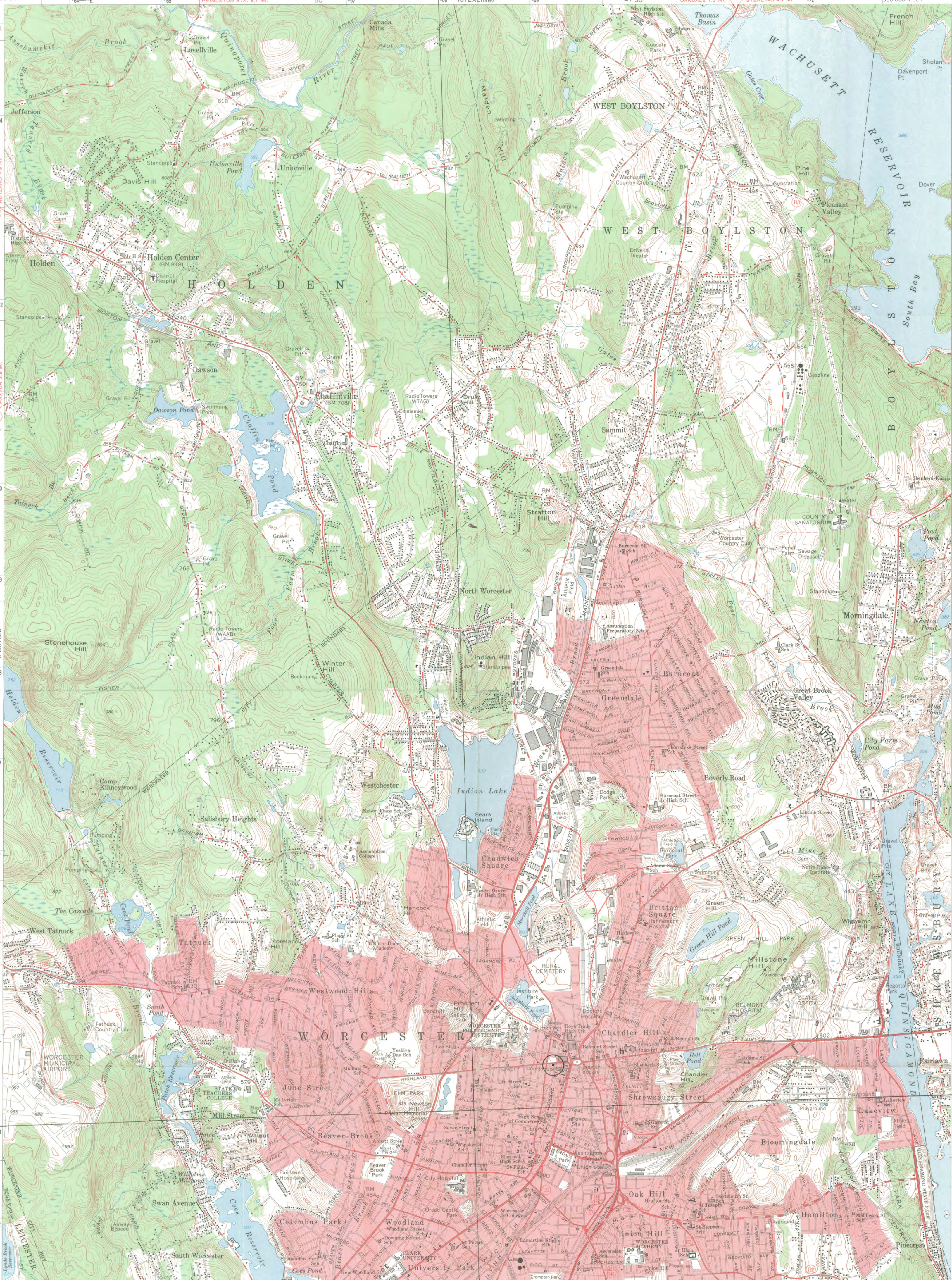
Whitcomb House
Worcester, MA
19268900/4683410

6668 IV NW
(WORCESTER)

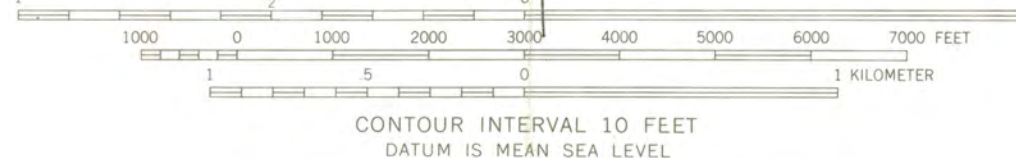
Whitcomb House
Worcester, MA
19268900/4683410
880 460

RECEIVED
JAN 19 1977
NATIONAL
REGISTER

180



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
Topography by planimetric surveys 1934. Revised 1960
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ————— Light-duty —————
Medium-duty ————— Unimproved dirt —————
State Route

WORCESTER NORTH, MASS.
N4215—W7145/7.5

1960

AMS 6668 IV SE—SERIES V814



PAUL GUZZI

*Secretary of the
Commonwealth*

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(617) 727-8470

January 12, 1977

Mr. Charles Herrington
Registrar
National Register
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240



Dear Charles:

Enclosed please find nomination forms for the following properties:

Worcester, Whitcomb House
Haverhill, Bradford Common Historic District
Watertown, Edmund Fowle House

These properties were reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (State Review Board) and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Elizabeth R. Amadon.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia L. Weslowski

Patricia L. Weslowski
Survey Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enc.
PLW/etd

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered NOV 9 1977

Name

Location

Sturbridge Common Historic District

Sturbridge
Worcester County

Whitcomb House

Worcester
Worcester County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward P. Boland
Hon. Joseph D. Early

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

880

Mott/js

11/10/77

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 4/14/77
Reviewer

INITIALS: L. B. Jones

NR

DOE

NOV 9 1977

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Whitcomb House

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER

51 Harvard St.

CITY, TOWN

Worcester

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 3rd

STATE

Massachusetts

25

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

code

Worcester

27

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR

- ☐ Substantially intact-1
☐ unknown - 4
☐ not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR

- ☒ Substantially intact-2
☐ unknown - 5
☐ not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS

- ☐ Substantially intact-3
☐ unknown - 6
☐ Not applicable-9

CONDITION -

- ☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

- ☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED
☐ Unexcavated

- ☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED
☐ Reconstructed
☐ Excavated

- ☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED
☐ Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

☒ Unknown

historic district?

YES

☒ NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?

YES

☒ NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?

YES

☒ NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES

NO

Saved?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- Residential

now- institutional - home for blind

SIGNIFICANCE:

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC☐ AGRICULTURE☒ ARCHITECTURE☐ ART☐ COMMERCE☐ COMMUNICATIONS☐ CONSERVATION☐ ECONOMICS☐ EDUCATION☐ ENGINEERING☐ EXPLORATION☒ INDUSTRY☐ INVENTION☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE☐ LAW/Gov't/politics☐ LITERATURE☐ MILITARY☐ MUSIC☐ PHILOSOPHY☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT☐ RELIGION☐ SCIENCE☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)☐ entertainment☐ health☐ recreation☐ settlement☐ socio/cultural☐ urban & commun
planning

Claims

"first"

YES

NO

"oldest"

YES

NO

"only"

YES

NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: *Queen Anne*

architect/m.builder: *Stephen C. Earle*

engineer:

landscape/garden designer:

artist/artisan:

interior decorator:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

(label role
&
appropriate date)

personal

*George Whitcomb prominent industrialist
and philanthropist*

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century):

1879-1880

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

.1-.9

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

*Stone, 2 1/2 story, irregular massing, gables, dormers,
corner tower, 2 story sections, chimneys*

*Stone carriage & stable house; 1 story, rectangular,
hip, ventilator*

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

*Good example of late 19th C domestic architecture
built for one of Worcester's most successful businessmen and
generous philanthropists; George Whitcomb*