

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 28 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name DOWNING, LEWIS JR., HOUSE
other names/site number none

2. Location

street & number 33 Pleasant Street N/A not for publication
city, town Concord N/A vicinity
state New Hampshire code NH county Merrimack code NH013 zip code 03301

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>2</u> | <u> </u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | <u> </u> | <u> </u> sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <u> </u> | <u> </u> structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u> </u> | <u> </u> objects |
| | | <u>2</u> | <u> </u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

R. Stewart Wallace
Signature of certifying official

JUL 23 1987
Date

New Hampshire
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Patrick W. Andrews

9/11/87

fs
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURYother: Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granitewalls weatherboardroof asphalt shingleother wooden porch; etchedcolored glass sidelights &
transom

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lewis Downing Jr. House is a two-and-a-half story frame Italianate building constructed in 1851. It is located one-and-a-half blocks from Concord's central business district in an area which has visually maintained its residential origins. Although its architect or builder is unknown, the house typifies the houses erected in the mid-nineteenth century by Concord's upper-middle class professionals. Its design and materials, while not ostentatious, bespeak the respectable position in both business and civic affairs held by its first owner, who lived here fifty years. Recent alterations incurred during the course of a certified historic rehabilitation have not marred the building's distinctive Italianate features.

The Downing House is located on the south side of Pleasant Street, just west of North Main Street, the primary business artery. The property is bounded by Pleasant Street on the north, the South Congregational Church (1860) on the east, an early 20th century residence that fronts onto Wall Street on the south, and a Second Empire house (ca. 1857) on the west. The block on which the Downing House stands, which extends between State Street and Green/South Streets, is predominantly mid-late 19th century and includes houses and churches.

The plan of the Downing House is rectangular, with two cross-gables. Surviving original Italianate architectural elements include eave brackets, a side entrance porch on the east elevation, three corbeled chimneys, an octagonal louvered window in all five attic gables, flat corner pilasters, and first floor bay windows with recessed panels beneath each window and dentil molding at the cornice. Most of the sash is original: 6/6 wooden, double-hung sash; the architraves have molded perimeters.

The primary entrance is located on the east elevation, beneath a one-story porch. The wooden door has two full-length panels with egg and dart molding. Full sidelights, transom and corner blocks are filled with splendid etched colored glass panes depicting floral and landscape scenes; they are in perfect condition. Original granite steps lead to the porch from the north; additional steps from the east were added in the late 19th century. The square posts with molded capitals which support the porch roof are a mid-20th century replacement; the historic posts had panels and were

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7. Description (cont.)

linked with flat wooden arches. A balustrade on the porch roof was also removed ca. 1940, but the turned balusters appear original.

The north elevation, which fronts onto Pleasant Street, is the gable-end of the main house; it is one bay wide. A bay window occupies the first story, and two closely-spaced windows, which replaced a tripartite window in 1984, occupy the second.

The east elevation, which contains the already described main entrance, is broken up by two projecting cross-gables. The rear cross-gable was added ca. 1875, when the one-story kitchen ell behind the front cross-gable was raised to two stories, and a narrow two-story side porch added.¹ That side porch was extended eastward approximately three feet and enclosed with multi-pane casement sash and transoms ca. 1925.

The south elevation has a rear entrance near the east corner with a modern door of the 1930s period and modest frame porch with shed roof. An early 20th century two-story screen porch addition obscures much of the elevation. It replaced a one-story addition constructed before 1889. In 1984, the screen sash of the addition was replaced with 1/1 double-glazed sash, the foundation rebuilt, and a narrow doorway removed.

The west elevation is similar to the east, although there are two bay windows on the first story, and the two-story side porch, toward the rear, which was partially enclosed ca. 1925, was framed-in in 1984.

The interior of the Downing House retains most of its original architectural features which, like the exterior features, are typical of the Italianate style in the region. They include four-panel doors; stepped, flat casings with broad, molded entablatures; two marble and two wooden fireplace surrounds; a curved front stairway with a massive, turned newel and arched wall niche; a narrow, rear stairway; and an early hanging lighting fixture in the front hall. Much of the original floor plan, particularly on the first floor, and many plaster walls remain intact.

A one-story frame garage built in the late 19th century as a small barn stands along the east property line, somewhat north of its original site. It has a gable roof, triple windows on the south wall, and a side entrance on the west framed by arched latticework. Eave brackets, corner posts and a semi-circular louver are part of its
(cont.)

¹This alteration is evident from historic photographs; visually the addition appears to be an integral part of the original design.

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7. Description (cont.)

original design, as well. Overhead garage doors on the north elevation were added ca. 1970. In 1984, the garage was converted into additional office space. The overhead door was replaced with a bay window, and the triple window on the west wall removed.

The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land on which 33 Pleasant Street now stands. There are no outbuildings or structures other than the above-referenced garage. The front and side yard (on the east) are lawn; a brick wall edged with low shrubs leads to the two sets of porch steps. The rear portion of the lot is grass, paved parking and trees. A brick walk connects the garage, parking area and rear porch entrance. When the house was initially constructed, the house lot extended south to Wall Street. The rear section was sold ca. 1904, and the stables were removed. By the 1950's, the heavily planted gardens and gazebo on the remaining portion of the lot had been removed.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

transportation
architecture

Period of Significance

1851-1901

Significant Dates

1851

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

Downing, Lewis Jr.

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lewis Downing Jr. House is significant for its association with Lewis Downing, Jr., president of Abbot, Downing & Company, which manufactured world-reknown coaches. Downing built 33 Pleasant Street for his own residence in 1851 and remained here until his death in 1901. His house is significant as a little altered example of Italianate architecture which represents the type of residential buildings that characterize Concord's mid-nineteenth century neighborhoods.

The Lewis Downing Jr. House is the only building that survives intact which is associated with any of the key people who shaped the Abbot-Downing coach business. The family homestead, which stood on South Main Street and was lived in by Lewis Downing Sr., is no longer standing. Similarly, J. Stephens Abbot's house, which stood at 24 South Main Street, has been demolished. Most of the factory buildings where the coaches were produced, on the block bounded by South Main, Perley, South State and West Streets, have been removed as well. Lewis Downing & Sons' factory site, which operated at the southeast corner of School and North State Streets in the mid-19th century until it remerged with the Abbot family, has been completely rebuilt. At the time Downing Jr. erected 33 Pleasant Street in 1851, he had been working in his father's business for fourteen years. It remained his sole occupation for the remainder of his life.

The first "Concord wagon" was produced in 1813 by Lewis Downing, Sr., a year after his arrival in Concord. For the next thirteen years, he slowly enlarged his business, continuing in the production of horse-drawn wagons. In 1826, in conjunction with J. Stephens Abbot, Downing manufactured New Hampshire's first stage coach, the famed "Concord coach." Downing and Abbot's coaches acquired quick fame. They were made entirely by hand, artistically and individually ornamented, and of exceedingly high quality. Though Downing and Abbot's partnership was dissolved in 1847, each man continued to manufacture coaches in Concord.

Lewis Downing Jr., who was born in Concord in 1820, joined his father's business when he was seventeen, after a short period of employment in a

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Concord directories, 1840-1980
Concord Monitor, 5/4/1887, 8/19/1901, 8/4/1975
The Granite State of the U.S., A History of New Hampshire from 1623 to
the Present, New York: The American Historical Co., Inc., 1956.
Vol 3, p. 43
Granite State Monthly, Vol. 31, p. 188
Hunt, Elmer Munison, "Abbot-Downing and the Concord Coach." In
Historical New Hampshire, Vol. 1, pp.3-22 (November 1945)
Lyford, James O., (ed.), History of Concord. Concord: Rumford Press,
1903. Vol. 1 & 2
Merrimack County Registry of Deeds and Probate
Moses, George H. (ed.), New Hampshire Men. A Collection of Biographical
Sketches. Concord: New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1893
New Hampshire Historical Society photograph collection
New Hampshire Notables. Concord: The Concord Press, 1955, p. 15

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
25 Ridge Road, Concord, NH 03301

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 19 293780 4786260
Zone Easting Northing
C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing
D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property includes the entire parcel on
which 33 Pleasant Street sits, as located on Assessors' Map 36, Lot
no. 169, and as described in Book 1459, Page 0922 at the Merrimack
County Registry of Deeds.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which 33 Pleasant
Street sits. Although the Downing House lot once extended south to
Wall Street, there are no surviving outbuildings on the lot now
fronting onto Wall Street.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Preservation Consultant
organization _____ date June 1987
street & number 25 Ridge Road telephone 603-225-7977
city or town Concord state NH zip code 03301

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8. Significance (cont.)

local store. After Downing and Abbot split, the business was renamed Lewis Downing & Sons, the "sons" including Lewis Jr. and his brother Alonzo. In 1865 Lewis Downing Sr. retired from the business, and Lewis Jr. succeeded him as president, a position he held until his death in 1901. Upon assuming leadership, Downing Jr. resumed the partnership with the Abbot family on the company's original South Main Street site and embarked upon a period of expansion. The company was incorporated in 1873 as Abbot, Downing & Company shortly after merging with a local carriage business.

Downing's first few years as president brought the company to its peak of prosperity. Its success spurred the city of Concord's own growth and development. The company drew large numbers of skilled workmen to Concord who were well-off financially and, as property owners and office-holders at city and state levels, men of some stature within the community. Similar, though smaller, carriage shops that followed the example set by Abbot-Downing & Company, were established in West Concord and the North End, as well as downtown, and contributed to the development of outlying sections of the city.

The Concord coach was prized for its fine construction and handsome appearance. The flat top and rounded bottom which typified a Concord coach quickly became the industry standard. Its suspension system, which caused a pleasant swinging motion, rather than a jouncing ride, was particularly sought after, and the firm received numerous orders from hotels, stage lines and wealthy citizens world-wide. The Civil War created voluminous orders for ambulances, gun carriages, baggage wagons and similar vehicles. As other countries developed, orders were received from Peru, Africa, Australia, California and other western states for stage coaches and express lines. With the advent of street railways shortly after the Civil War, the company produced street cars.

Throughout the 1870s, 1880s and early 1890s, Abbot, Downing & Company flourished, opening shops in New York, Vermont and an agency in Australia. Ironically, its concentration on custom orders and handiwork at a time when mass production was overtaking the market eventually brought the company to its demise. In 1900 creditors assumed its assets and, after Downing's death the following year, his family disengaged itself from the company. Though it would be tempting to assign the fall of the company to Downing's death and subsequent loss of leadership, his death was merely a coincidence, overshadowed by changes in industrial production and the advent of the automobile. In an effort to protect the community from the loss of a major business, a group of local investors bought the company in 1912, adding motorized trucks and fire engines to its line. However, even reorganization as the Abbot-Downing Truck and Body Company in 1919 did not save the company and it dissolved six years later.

(cont.)

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8. Significance (cont.)

Lewis Downing Jr. was an active man whose activities extended far beyond the Abbot, Downing & Company. Prominent in the financial affairs of Concord, he served as director and later president for twenty-three years of the National State Capitol Bank, as vice-president of the Loan and Trust Savings Bank, as well as a director of the Stark Mill in Manchester. He was an incorporator and early director of the Concord Street Railway, which began running in 1878; in fact, its street cars were fabricated at the Abbot, Downing & Company shops. Often referred to as the patriarch of the Unitarian Church, Downing was deeply involved in its activities and progress, and he was on the first board of directors for White Park, the city's foremost Victorian park. In 1876 he served as delegate to the state's constitutional convention. Downing was also extremely interested in local history. He drew early maps and plans of Concord and was involved in the two-volume History of Concord published two years after his death.

Following Downing's death, his widow Clara and only child Gertrude continued to live in the house. Clara Downing died in 1909, and the property was conveyed to their daughter. In 1919 the house was sold to Robert Oscar Blood, a physician, but Gertrude Downing remained as a boarder until 1929 when she left Concord. Robert O. Blood (1887-1975) was a graduate of Dartmouth Medical College; he established his Concord practice in 1915, living and practicing there for the remainder of his long life. In addition to his medical practice, he was the owner/operator of a dairy farm and served two terms as governor of the state (1941-45). He lived at 33 Pleasant Street from 1919 until 1926.

In 1930 the property was purchased by Charles Parsons, also a doctor, for use as a residence and medical office. Following Parson's death in 1963, the house passed to his wife. Margaret Parson's will left the property to Concord Hospital and the Trustees of Dartmouth College; in 1983 they auctioned it to the present owners, an accounting firm.

The Lewis Downing Jr. House is representative of mid-nineteenth century upper-middle class Italianate architecture which typifies Concord's stylish neighborhoods of that period. Its alterations are minimal and do not intrude upon its architectural significance. Distinctive Italianate features include the cross-gable plan, bracketed eaves, octagonal gable windows, bay windows, and the side entrance porch. The architect for the house is not known.

(cont.)

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8. Significance (cont.)

Concord enjoyed a major period of prosperity in the mid-nineteenth century, reflected by the large number of Italianate and Second Empire houses constructed during that period. Though the blocks just north of North Main Street were once residential enclaves, commercial development has consumed most of the former houses. Thirty-three Pleasant Street, just one-and-a-half blocks west of Main Street, is one of only three Italianate residences within the business district which have survived the twentieth century with minimal alterations. It is located on a short block comprised predominantly of mid-late nineteenth century houses, now converted to offices, and two brick churches. Though the block would potentially qualify as an historic district, the Lewis Downing Jr. House, with its strong historical associations and architectural intactness, is of individual significance.

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9. Bibliographical References (cont.)

Riddle, Royce & Huggins, Clarence, "From Concord Coaches to Concord Trucks." In Splash Pan, Vol. VI, no. 3 (summer 1960), pp. 3-7, 20-21

Scheiber, Harry N., "Coach, Wagon and Motor-Truck Manufacturers, 1813-1928: The Abbot-Downing Company of Concord." In Historical New Hampshire, vol. 20, no. 3 (autumn 1965), pp. 3-25

Wechsler, Nathan & Company, photograph collection

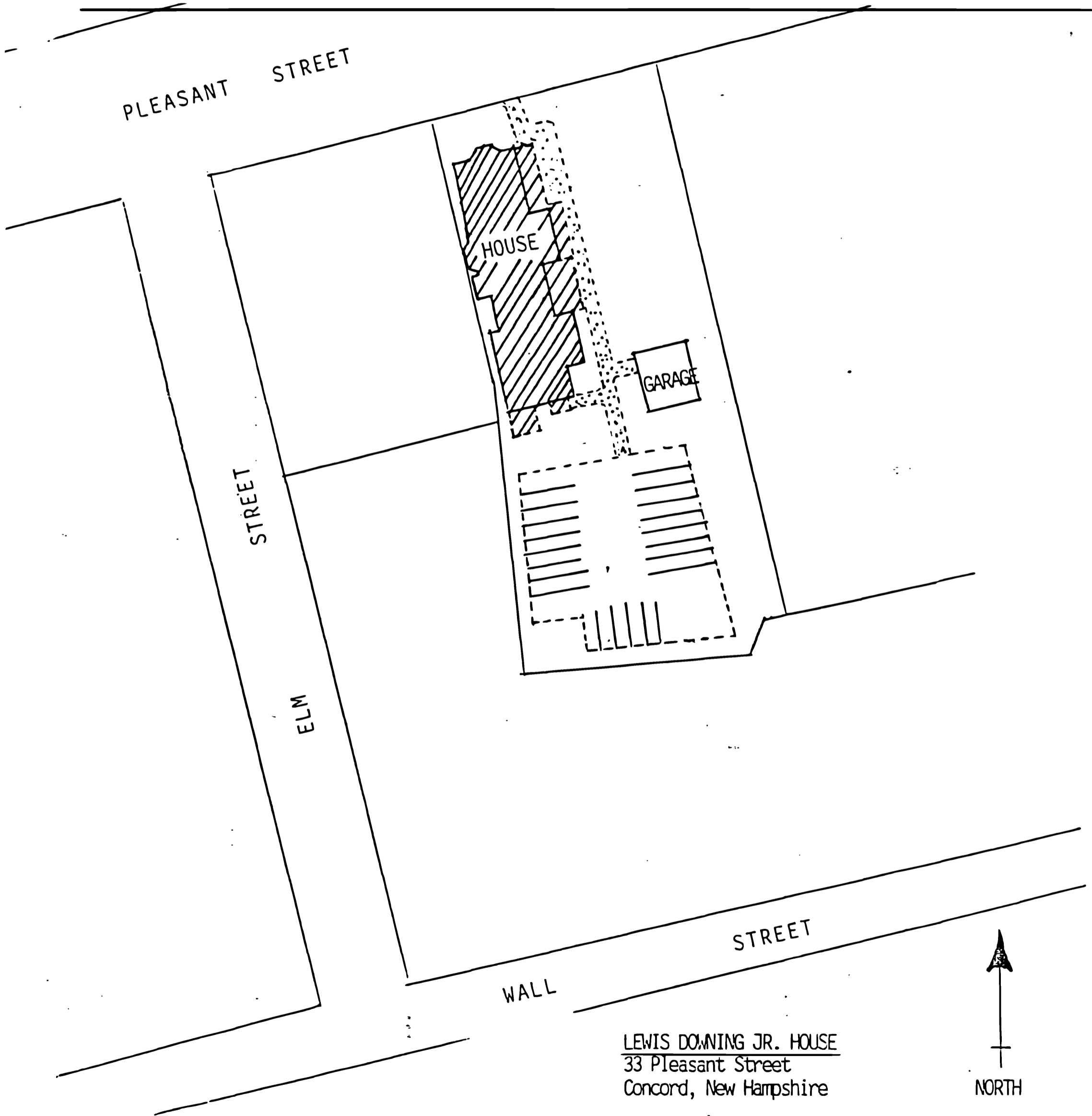
Maps

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1851 | Map of Village of Concord (Henry F. Walling, engineer) |
| 1858 | Map of Merrimack County (Henry R. Walling, engineer) |
| 1868 | Map of the City of Concord (published by E.F. Sanford & J.H. Goodhue, Philadelphia) |
| 1874 | Sanborn insurance map (NHHS) |
| 1889 | Sanborn insurance map (NHHS) |
| 1889 | Plan of the Lewis Downing Jr. Homestead (MCRD) |
| 1892 | Atlas of the State of New Hampshire (published by D.H. Hurd & Co.) |
| 1893 | Sanborn insurance map (NHHS) |
| 1899 | Sanborn insurance map (NHHS) |
| 1906 | Sanborn insurance map (NHHS) |

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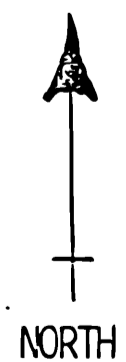
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LEWIS DOWNING JR. HOUSE
33 Pleasant Street
Concord, New Hampshire

SCALE: 1" = 50' (approx)



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This certifies that the appearance has not changed since these photographs were taken.