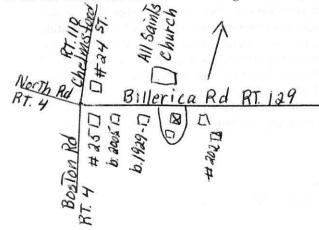
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING 220 Morrissey Boulevard Boston, Massachusetts 02125



Sketch wrap

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month / year) April 2005

Assessor's Number USGS Quad

Area(s) Form Number

| 84/334/6 | Billerica | 286 |
|----------|-----------|-----|
| | | |

Town Chelmsford

Place (neighborhood or village) Chelmsford Center

Address 15-17 Billerica Rd.

Historic Name W.A. Ingham House

Uses: Present residence, 2 family

Original residence, 1 family

Date of Construction 1902

Source Lowell Sunday Telegram; Lowell Weekly Journal Middlesex No. District Registry of Deeds, Bk. 343, pg. 131 Style/Form

Architect/Builder a Lowell architect

Exterior Material:

Foundation split granite blocks

Wall/Trim vinyl siding

Roof hip style/asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures commercial building, which is a former carriage house

sq. f.

residential

Major Alterations (with dates) see alterations on continuation sheet

Condition average

Moved X no yes Date

| Acreage | 43830 |
|---------|-------|
| | |

Setting

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

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

This residence at 15-17 Billerica Rd. is typical in style to many others erected just after the turn of the 20th Century. Somewhat longer in depth than width, it gives the impression of a square building.

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.

On March 21, 1902 it was reported in the Lowell Weekly Journal "that a Lowell architect is preparing plans for a dwelling house for W.A. Ingham. Mr. Ingham's lot is on Billerica street, nearly opposite All Saints' church." Batters were set up for the house by April 4th. However, William and Nancy Ingham didn't actually purchase the property until April 23, 1902, and it was with the restrictions that no dwelling be erected to cost less than \$3000, nor have its front wall nearer the street than that of the Armstrong house next door at 19 Billerica Rd., and no building on the premises "be occupied or used for the purpose of carrying on any manufacturing, mechanical or any offensive trade or calling whatever." By early May the house was boarded in and carpenters were rushing their work. By June 1st the dwelling was "about completed for living purposes and Mr. Ingham will soon be settled there. He thinks Chelmsford is a nice quiet place to live in and very accessible. 'We can come out here in about 20 minutes from the Post office in Lowell,' said he. He seems more than glad to get rid of the care of a large expensive house and settle down into real home living." A native of Maine, William Ingham had moved to Carlisle when a boy of 17 or 18 years. During the Civil War he served with the 47th & 6th MA Regiments, principally in the vicinity of Port Hudson. After the war, Mr. Ingham started a grocery business in Lowell but gave that up to become one of the pioneers in the telephone business, working with Charles Glidden with the installation of the first telephone service. About this time he had erected a fine residence in upper Middlesex St., Lowell. He and his wife were living there in 1880, when he was president of the Lowell Telephone Company. "Lowell had four operators on duty and had over 200 customers. Because each operator knew her customers by name, when one was ill it messed up the entire operation. In December 1880 that city was beginning its great epidemic of measles, and a few days before Christmas two of the four operators were out sick. Company president W. A. Ingham panicked and called a doctor. Moses Greeley Parker who also owned telephone stock. The doctor was unable to get the girls back to work, and training new girls to memorize 200 names was impossible. Dr. Parker suggested that instead of names the company should use numbers instead. Ingham scoffed that people had names and would never stand for having numbers, but it was either that or the telephone company would be out of business. The idea took hold, and so we have numbers today. Because Dr. Parker was the first subscriber in Lowell to have a telephone, his number was 1." Meanwhile, Mr. Ingham had started a wholesale grocery business in Appleton St. but soon built a brick building on Church St. in Lowell, where the business remained.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES See continuation sheet

Lowell Weekly Journal: Mar. 21, Apr. 4, May 2, May 9, 1902 1902; Chelmsford Newsweekly: July 9, 1992 Lowell Sunday Telegram: Nov. 24, Dec. 29, 1901; Jan. 19, Apr. 27, June 1, 1902 Lowell Courier-Citizen: Mar. 17, 19, 1910; Mar 7, 11, 1918 Lowell Sun: Mar. 17, 1910; Nov. 20, 1977 Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Bk. 343, pg. 98; Apr. 23, 1902 Assessors' records Town Clerk's records Building Inspector's records Chelmsford street directories Nancy Mahr, April 2005

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

Town CHELMSFORD

Property Address 15 BILLERICA RD.

Area(s) Form No.

286

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

HISTORY

Seven years after Mr. & Mrs. Ingham came to 15 Billerica Road in Chelmsford, he had a long battle with nephritis and died at his home on March 16, 1910 at age 67 years, just eight years after the house at 15 Billerica Rd. was built. His widow remained in the house until her own death in 1918, also in March. She was 70 years old. Both Inghams were buried in Lowell.

Frank J. and Mary Green purchased the 15 Billerica property from the Ingham estate in 1918 but only remained there for six years before moving to Lowell, where he sold second hand furniture (72 Middlesex St.). The third owners, the Hamilton family, resided there for 53 years. Thomas & Rachel Hamilton had been living nearby on Westford St. before moving here. He worked as a buyer until his probable retirement in 1950 and moved out of town. In 1974, when he sold to his son Creighton, Thomas was residing in Florida. After serving in the Army during World War II, Creighton Hamilton worked as an insurance agent and then as a laboratory technician. His wife, Doris, worked as a clerk. It was during the Hamilton ownership that the house was converted to a two family residence. During the early 1960s various people moved in with them for brief periods. By 1976 both Creighton and Doris had retired, and the house was sold the following year to a real estate agent, Henrick Johnson Jr. & his wife, Jeanne. In 1984 Vinal E. (Ted). Lewis purchased it but apparently never lived in the house. The 3 years of Lewis ownership were rather turbulent ones (see alterations), and in 2005 is owned by the Tropeano Trust.

ALTERATIONS

Main house:

porch on right rear removed after 1915 and replaced with a smaller open one.

porch was enclosed and a sliding door put in the rear wall sometime after Feb. 1965, ...

since 1982 sun deck was added to rear of house

1991 new wood sun deck replaced old deck at rear of house. Kinney Construction Co.

July 2002

Permit issued to replace existing front/side stairs, repair/replace existing windows, but whether it was work done on the house or barn is not certain.

Barn:

In 1982, before Vinal E. (Ted) Lewis purchased the property, he applied to construct a dwelling on the south side of 15 Billerica Rd., but it was denied. In April 1985 he started to make changes in the barn, and it was feared by neighbors that the purpose of the work was to convert it into a residence or office, which would be against zoning. Interior partitions were being constructed to divide the barn into rooms, picture windows and a side door were installed, and a stop work order was issued. He replied that it was his intention to use the barn for personal storage. By June 22 of that year a half bath with water closet had been installed, with drainage and water piping done, although no permit for plumbing had been applied for. A cease & desist order was given. On Mar. 19, 1986 Mr. Lewis applied for an "occupancy permit, for "storage for residential use only." The following April the building was again inspected and a newly constructed deck was found attached to the "storage building." He was ordered to apply for a permit to build within seven days. The next month, May, Joseph Tropeano wrote the building inspector saying that he planned to purchase the property and to work with him. He also said that, "Mr. Lewis, the present owner, is busy with some projects in New Hampshire. The deck existing seems well built."

In June 1987 Mr. Tropeano made an application to a porch and entrance (no roof) over the pre-existing sun deck. The barn then had 3 rooms, 2 stories, no baths were listed. Later that summer a special permit for a home occupation was denied, but an appeal was granted. Aug. 1989 approval was given to remodel one of the two baths. In 1996 the Black Diamond Corporation (tools & pipe) was given a business certificate, over a neighbor's objection. The Tropeano family did not renew the business certificate in 2004.

15 – 17 Billerica Road Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds

| Bk. 14173, pg. 151 | Sept. 24, 2002 | Joseph T. Tropeano, Brookline, to Emily Tropeano Trust of 2002 \$1 15-17 Billerica Rd. 1)12,759 sq. ft & buildings there, south side Billerica St. 2) 33,700 sq. ft in Chelmsford same: Lewis deed, Bk. 4104, pg. 149 |
|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Bk. 4104, pg. 149 | Jan. 12, 1987 | Vinal E. Lewis, Trustee of 15-17 Billerica Rd. Trust, to Joseph T. Tropeano, 24 Auburn St., Brookline \$252,000 12,759 sq. ft & buildings there, south side Billerica St. 33,700 sq. ft in Chelmsford same: Smith deed, Bk. 2906, pg. 69 |
| Bk. 2906, pg. 69 | Dec. 4, 1984 | David J. Smith to Vinal E. Lewis, 148 Pheasant Hill Rd., Carlisle \$160,000 12,759 sq. ft & buildings there, south side Billerica St. 33,700 sq. ft in Chelmsford same: Johnson deed, bk. 2580, pg. 158 |
| Bk. 2580, pg. 158 | Dec. 23, 1982 | Richard H. Johnson to David J. Smith, 15 Billerica Rd. \$115,000 12,759 sq. ft & buildings there, south side Billerica St. 33,700 sq. ft in Chelmsford same: Bk. 2049, pg. 716 |
| Bk. 2449, pg. 716 | Nov. 10, 1980 | Henrick R. Johnson Jr. & Jeanne K. Johnson, husband & wife, to Richard M. Johnson, 15-17 Billerica Road 12,759 sq. ft & buildings there, south side Billerica St. 33,700 sq. ft in Chelmsford same: Hamilton deed 1977, Bk. 2271, pg. 224 |

15 Billerica Road

| Book 2169, pg. 131 | 9/ 4/1975 | Creighton M. Hamilton to Creighton M. & Doris F, Hamilton Parcel 1 - 12,750 sq. ft. & buildings Parcel 2 - 33,700 sq. ft. |
|--------------------------|------------|--|
| Book 2139, pg. 159 | 12/17/1974 | Thomas L. Hamilton, St. Petersburg, Fla to Thomas L., St. Petersburg, & Creighton M. Hamilton Parcel 1 - 12,750 sq. ft. & buildings Parcel 2 - 33,700 sq. ft. |
| Book 704, pg. 521 | 4/17/1924 | Frank J. & Mary A. Green to Thomas L. & Rachel L. Hamilton 12,750 sq. ft. & buildings thereon |
| Middlesex Probate Docket | 5/ 2/1918 | Estate of Nancy H. Ingham to Frank J. & Mary A. Green |
| Book 343, pg. 98 | 4/23/1902 | <pre>John M. Fiske, Orange, N.J.; Joseph W. Fiske, Passaic, N.J.; Frederick A.P. Fiske, Somerville; Elizabeth F. Warren; Eliaabeth A. Fiske to Nancy H. Ingham 12,750 sq. feet land Restrictions:no dwelling erected to 1. cost less than \$3000 2. front wall nearer to Billerica St. than that of Armstrong house. 3. occupied for manufacturing, mechanical or any offensive trade or calling whatever.</pre> |

Lowell Sunday Telegram

November 24, 1901 - W.A. Ingham is contemplating building a new house in Chelmsford Centre about opposite the Unitarian church and not far from the historic Fiske estate recently bought by Mr. Armstrong of the new bottling company. That concern, by the way, is laying its pipes from the Robin's hill, from which it will get its water.

December 29, 1901 Chelmsford Centre double class courses indexed a standard set and set and set and set and set of the se

January 19, 1902 - It is reported that one or two Lowell people are talking of building in Chelmsford the coming season; that is in addition to the house proposed by Mr. W.A. Ingham on the hill opposite the Unitarian church.

April 27, 1902 Middletownthe lot opposite where W.A. Ingham will build this season.....

June 1, 1902 - The new house for Mr. Wm. A. Ingham at the Centre is about completed for living purposes and Mr. Ingham will soon be settled there. He thinks Chelmsford is a nice quiet place to live in and very accessible. "WE can come out here in about 20 minutes from the Postoffice in Lowell," said he.....He seems more than glad to get rid of the care of a large expensive house and settle down into real home living.

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Lowell Weekly Journal

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March 21, 1902 - It is reported that a Lowell architect is preparing plans for a dwelling house for W.A. Ingham. Mr. Ingham's lot is on Bilderica street, nearly opposite All Saints' church.

April 4, 1902 - W.A. Ingham has the batters up for his house on Billerica street.

May 2, 1902 - Carpenters are at work upon the new house of W.A, Ingham in Billerica street.

May 9, 1902 - W.A. Ingham's new house in Billerica street is boarded in and the carpenters are rushing their work.

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Perry made the following statement: : "The contract favors the city of Lowell to the extent that it can be broken at any time in the five years,

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Lowell Sun

Nov. 20, 1977 Deeds \$55,000 Creighton M. Hamilton et ux to Henrick R. Johnson jr. et ux

April 12, 1987 when a ball internation gall international ball in programmer and we will be ball of the ball OPEN TODAY 1-4 15-17 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford

Prime location, acre plus right in Chelmsford Center, stately 2 family with finished garage for possible owneroccupant home office. Explore your opportunity today. I will get had be to be a second office. Explore your opportunity today.

Chelmsford Newsweekly of he by the new rest rest processes garage and by heatened and an antibility

July 9, 1992, Article by Herbert Morton Did Alexander Graham Bell Expect This?

By 1880, Lowell had four operators on duty and had over 200 customers. Because each operator knew her customers by name, when one was ill it messed up the entire operation. In December 1880 Lowell was beginning its great epidemic of measles, and a few days before Christmas two of the four operators were out sick. Company president W. A. Ingham panicked and called a doctor, Moses Greeley Parker, who also owned telephone stock. The doctor was unable to get the girls back to work, and training new girls to memorize 200 names was impossible. Dr. Parker suggested that instead of names the company should use numbers instead. Ingham scoffed that people had names and would never stand for having numbers, but it was either that or the telephone company would be out of business. The idea took hold, and so we have numbers today. Because Dr. Parker was the first subscriber in Lowell to have a telephone, his number was 1.

Obituaries & Death/Funeral Notices

Lowell Sun, March 17, 1910

Funeral Notice:

Ingham - The funeral of William A. Ingham will take place from his home in Billerica Street, Chelmsford Centre, Saturday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. Friends invited. Burial private.

Courier-Citizen, Saturday, March 19, 1910

Deaths:

Ingham – In Chelmsford Centre, March 16, William A. Ingham, aged 68 years. The funeral will be held from the residence, Billerica road, Chelmsford Centre, Saturday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. Friends invited. Burial private.

[See also his obituary in house folder]

Courier-Citizen, Thursday, March 7, 1918

Deaths:

1902 - Darmanters are at work upon the new house of In Chelmsford centre, March 6, at her home in Billerica street. Nancy H. Ingham, widow of William A. Ingham, aged 70 years. Funeral services will be held at her home in Billerica street, Chelmsford centre, Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Friends invited.

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Courier-Citizen, Monday, March 11, 1918 news item:

The funeral of Mrs. William A. Ingham took place on Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the home in Billerica street, where the services were conducted by Rev. Caleb E. Fisher of the First Universalist church, Lowell, and were attended by a large number of relatives and friends. There were many beautiful floral tributes. Three selections, "Sometime We'll Understand," "Lead Kindly Light" and "Nearer My God To Thee," were sung by the Unitarian choir, Miss Hurd, Mrs. Haskell, Arthur M. Warren and Harry Priestly. The bearers were Messrs. E.W. Sweetser, C. George Armstring, F.J. Green and F.B. Fletcher. Burial was in the family lot in the Lowell cemetery, the arrangements being under the direction of Undertaker Perham.

Building Inspector's Records: summary

Aug. 13, 1982 property map, including buildings Oct. 4, 1982 denial of appeal to build dwelling on lot on south side of 15 Billerica Rd. April 8, 1985 permit #356 repair & replace windows & doors/storage for residential use only is attached to March 19, 1986 permit 16' April 16, 1975 Ted Lewis letter: his intention to use barn for personal storage April 18, 1985 Selectmen letter: Kilmartin concern re renovating barn to residential use April 23, 1985 Building Inspector letter to Ted Lewis: interior partitions dividing barn into rooms: stop work ordered to submit plans & get permit Concern: turning barn into apartment or an office April 24, 1985 Ted Lewis letter: barn to be for personal use. If were to be 2 apartments, it would need full baths, which it does not have May 10, 1985 Kilmartin letter: asking for cease & desist order. Barn should be restored to original condition: elimination of picture windows and side doors. June 6, 1985 Selectmen letter: concern, that is being made into residential or commercial use. Violation should be halted as soon as possible. June 22, 1985 Building inspector letter to Ted Lewis: inspected under permit #356: ¹/₂ bath installed, drainage & plumbing, with no permit. Cease & desist order given Undated interior plan, shows 1/2 bath March 19, 1986 Permit #16' occupancy for residential 15-17 Billerica Rd. April 30, 1987 Building inspector letter to Ted Lewis: inspected property & found newly constructed deck attached to storage building: no permit May 13, 1987 Tropeano letter: present owner, Ted Lewis very busy in NH. When papers passed on June 11, would like to work with Building inspector. Deck seems well built. June 24, 1987 Permit #648 build pre-existing sun deck, construction of porch & entrance, no roof (over deck) building has: 3 rooms, 2 stories, no baths listed. Drawn plan July 9, 1987 application for home occupation special permit denied Aug. 31, 1987 Board of Appeals: special permit for home occupation granted Aug. 16, 1989 Permit #427 to remodel bath; Already 2 stories, 2 baths. Approved May 30, 1991 Permit #200 addition/remove old sun deck, add new sundeck Approved. Drawn plan July 19, 1996

Black Diamond Corp. Business certificate

Apr. 2, 2001

Kilmartin complaint to selectmen: tropeano not a resident & is running business in an out-building. Debris outside an eyesore; washinjg machine & TV curbside for several months

[He was told to remove the items]

July 30, 2002

Permit #534 replace existing front/side stairs, repair/replace existing windows

Aug. 2, 2002

Black Diamond: tools & pipe

not renewed by Aug. 2004



15-17 Billerica Road

1/27/2006 F. Merriam



15-17 Billerica Road

1/27/2006 F. Merriam

