

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.24
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Choate, Charles Francis Jr. House
<b>Common Name:</b>	Saint Mark's School Headmaster's House
<b>Address:</b>	43 Main St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Southborough
<b>Local No:</b>	53-9
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	c 1910
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Classical Revival; Colonial Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Multiple Family Dwelling House; Private School; Secondary Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Education; Recreation; Religion
<b>Area(s):</b>	
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Stucco; Wood Foundation: Stone, Uncut; Granite



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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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Massachusetts Historical Commission

53-9

Marlborough

24, 25, 646, 647

Massachusetts Archives Building

220 Morrissey Boulevard

Boston, MA 02125

RECEIVED

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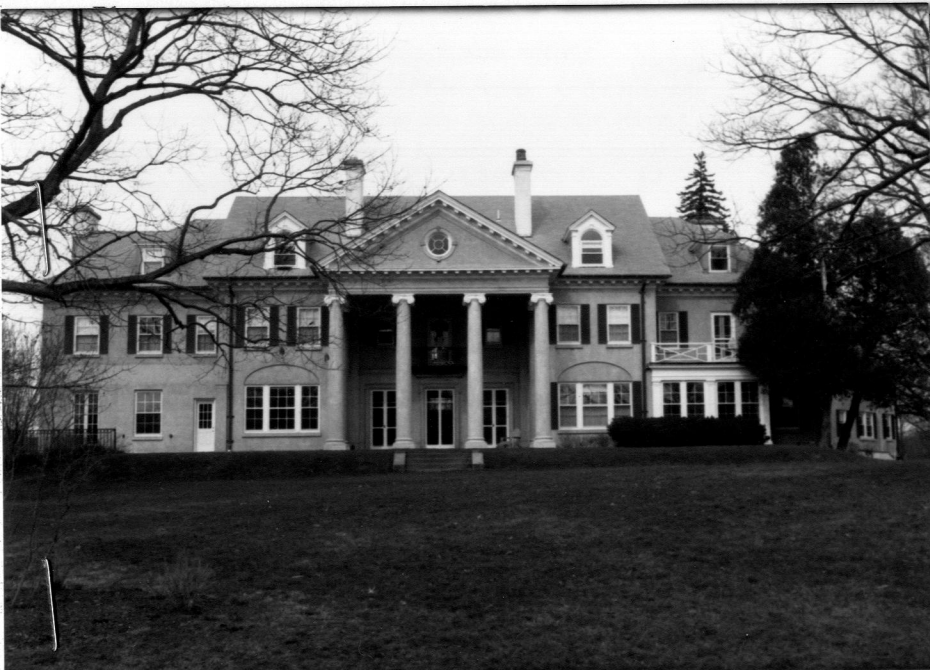
MASS. HIST. COMM

Town Southborough

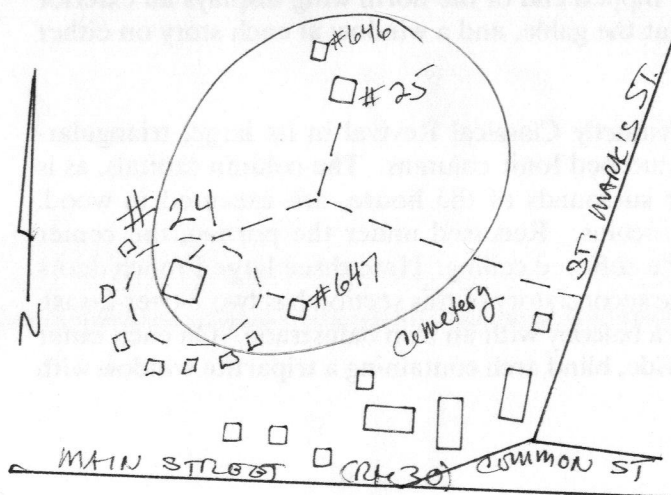
Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Southborough centerAddress 43 Main StreetHistoric Name Charles F. Choate, Jr. HousePresent multi-family dwellingsOriginal dwelling and stableDate of Construction ca. 1910Source assessor's records; visual assessmentForm Colonial and Classical RevivalArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation rubble and split graniteWall/Trim stuccoRoof asphaltOutbuildings/Secondary Structures formerstable, 2 garages (see text); 7 late-20th-C. housesMajor Alterations (with dates) rebuilt terrace,rear courtyard; some window and door replacement: 1990sCondition goodMoved [x]no [ ] yes Date N/AAcreage approximately 25 acresSetting Occupies large, open site on rise betweenRtes. 30 and 85 including wetlands, playing fields, stone walls; some trees, shrubs of old Choate landscaping.

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.

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultantsOrganization Southborough Historical CommissionDate March, 2000

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [x] *see continuation sheet*

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

Now accompanied by seven modern faculty houses for St. Mark's School, the **Charles F. Choate, Jr. House** (#24) and its **stable** (#25) occupy a picturesque setting on the low hill just north of the Fay School and St. Mark's Church at Southborough center. Over the last several decades, trees have grown up on both sides of Main Street south and west of the house, obscuring the "glimpse of Wachusett" that could once be seen from the property. Originally, the view across the Stony Brook valley must have been one of the great assets of this hilltop setting.

The house, built between 1909 and 1913, is a sprawling 2 1/2-story Colonial and Classical Revival stucco mansion, with a central side-gabled block flanked by a pair of hip-roofed wings. Like the **JM Sears House** at 1 Sears Road (Form #20), a long diagonal service wing extends to the southeast. As was fashionable in early twentieth-century country estates, the building has two facades--one facing the main carriage drive that curves southwest up the hill from St. Mark's Street, the other oriented toward a scenic view to be enjoyed by the occupants of the house and their guests. While generally in the Colonial Revival style, the design of the house combines features of both the Federal and Classical Revivals. The east front is the more Federal Revival in feeling. Here the seven-bay main facade has a triangular-pedimented center pavilion, where a large Palladian window at the second-story level forms the main focal point. Fluted pilasters divide the three parts of the window, which opens onto a broad balcony with a turned balustrade. Below the window at the first story is a large 6-panel door, flanked by large, widely-spaced, leaded sidelights. Most of the windows of the house are 6-over-6-sash, inset into the stucco walls; most are now fitted with modern vinyl shutters. At the attic level, a central window in the pediment, and the single windows of four hip-roofed dormers, have replacement 1-over-1-sash. While the main roof is side-gabled, the two end wings are hip-roofed, and each projects forward from the main wall plane as a wide hipped bay. A second entry under a new shed-roofed canopy is located in the face of the north wing. It is fitted with what appears to be a mid-20th-century 4-panel door with four lights across the top, but the four-light transom above the opening appears to be original. North of this entry, filling most of the first story of the north wing, is a wide polygonal bay window with a pair of 6/6's under a hipped roof with exposed rafter ends. The inner south wing has a similar transomed entry, but with a 9-light-and-panel door. A doorway in the face of the long diagonal southeast wing has a 6-panel door, and a triangular-pedimented surround with fluted pilasters.

Progressing counter-clockwise around the building, the hipped end of the north wing displays an exterior stuccoed chimney that rises through the roof overhang at the gable, and a window at each story on either side of the chimney.

The west facade is more formal than the east, and distinctly Classical Revival in its large, triangular-pedimented center portico supported on four massive stuccoed Ionic columns. The column capitals, as is also true of all of the cornices and window and door surrounds of the house, are executed in wood. Occupying the center of the pediment is a keystone oculi. Recessed under the portico, the center section of the main house is set back several feet, under a coffered ceiling. Here three large French doors open out onto a newly-tiled terrace at the first story. The second story of this section has two 2-over-2-sash windows and a center, multi-light door that opens onto a balcony with an iron balustrade. On each outer part of the main block to either side of the portico is a wide, blind arch containing a tripartite window with a 6/6-sash at the center, and 4/4's at the sides.

[x] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

43 Main Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)

Form No.  
24, 25, 646, 647

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

The west facade of the north wing is three bays long, with 6/6 windows and vinyl shutters at the second story, and one window flanked by a French door and a replacement 9-light-over-panel door at the first. A recently rebuilt open brick terrace fronts the north wing, ending at the portico. The south wing displays one 6/6 window and a French door at the second story, and a glassed sunporch with paired 4-over-4-sash between recessed-paneled posts at the first. A Chinese-inspired balustrade rings the top of the sunporch. South of the porch is another 6-over-6-sash window.

Continuing counter-clockwise around the house, the south end of the south wing is three bays wide at the second story, with a wide polygonal bay window in the center of the first story. In the roof slope is one hip-roofed dormer. The long southeast service wing displays an asymmetrical arrangement of six single and paired 6-over-6-sash at both stories, with a paired French door in the second bay of the first. The end of the wing has a gable-on-hip roof, two window bays at the second story, and, at the first, what appears to be an added windowless shed-roofed wood-frame bay at the center.

Architectural trim of the house includes a molded and modillioned boxed wood cornice on the main house and wings, a broad, unboxed roof overhang with exposed rafter ends on the southeast wing, and a stuccoed water table on all sections.

Interior. Like the house of Charles Choate's good friend Thomas Lindsay of the same period at 49 Lynbrook Road (Form #7), at the center core of this house is a large stair/reception hall, with the three-part stair rising up the east wall under the Palladian window. The stair balustrade is elaborately turned, and paneled wainscoting rises up the stair wall. The space under the broad stair landing is enclosed as an entry vestibule, with an interior leaded-glass door and sidelights. In the north wall of the hall is a fireplace with an elaborate Classical surround with eared and paneled overmantel, and a mantelpiece adorned with paneled pilasters, volutes, and fretwork. Wide, segmental-arched openings to the passage to either side of the stair hall are trimmed with fluted and paneled pilasters. In the Choates' era the building was widely known for both the design and content of its large library, built by Charles Choate to house his extensive collection of legal volumes, known to have been one of the best in the country.

Outbuildings.

About 150 yards northeast of the house is a large, shingled and stuccoed stable (#25), where the Choates housed their prize horses--up to ten at one time. Generally H-plan in configuration, the building consists of a long two-story, side-gabled main block, with two one-story gabled wings extending forward from each end, and two smaller, leanto ells to the rear. The prominent gable ends of the front wings are stucco walls, which continue as a 5-foot-high wall between the wings to form a courtyard enclosure. The courtyard walls terminate in a pair of large, square gateposts, topped with molded wooden capitals with ball finials. Between the posts is a two-part board gate.

The second-story of the main building overhangs the first at both front and sides. At the center of the main block, echoing the house design, is a broad pavilion with a triangular, flush-boarded pediment marked by an oculus in the center. Below the pediment are wide pilasters with long, raised shaped panels. The main center doorway is positioned in the pavilion under a keystone frieze and surrounded by flush board. The door, rather than echoing anything in the Choate House, is a tongue-and-grooved door with a small upper glass light and large decorative iron hinges similar to those on St. Mark's Church. In the second story of the pavilion is a tripartite window with a 6-over-6-sash in the center, and 4-pane sidelights. (Cont.)



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

43 Main Street

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
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Area(s)

Form No.  
24, 25, 646, 647

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

The main wall on either side of the pavilion has one 6-over-6-sash at each story. (Most of the windows in the building were replaced in the early 1990s.) Crowning the center of the roof ridge is a large octagonal open cupola with a copper Moorish domed roof, topped by a copper finial and weather vane. A semi-circular lunette with divided panes occupies the gable peak of each end of the main block.

Much of this building was redesigned in the process of converting it to living space in about 1949. The main wings, which consist of a higher section abutting the main building, and a lower-roofed outer section with a chimney in the ridge, each have what appears to be a mid-twentieth-century pedimented entry in the center of the side facing the courtyard. 6/6 windows occupy their outer and inner sides.

At the rear of the building, each leanto ell has acquired a large shed-roofed dormer. Abutting the center of the rear wall of the main building is a low cross-gabled ell. Between this ell and the southeast leanto is a rare surviving early-twentieth-century laundry yard, complete with hanging apparatus, clotheslines, and pulleys. In the main wall, opening into the laundry yard, is what appears to be a small ice-box door. Much of the cornice and water table of this building have been replaced with simple boards, or covered by metal or vinyl flashing. A narrow crown molding remains at the roof edge of some portions of the rear wall, however.

Standing at the end of a short drive just north of the stable is a square, shingled, hip-roofed two-car garage (#646) of about 1918. Now fitted with a pair of panel-and-glass overhead garage doors, this small building may have housed Mr. Choate's Rickenbaker touring car. Another garage (#647) southeast of the house, probably dating to about 1940, is a shed-roofed, concrete-block six-car building, with six panel-and-glass overhead doors.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain 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.*

The Choate mansion is one of a few large stucco houses in Southborough that represent the Early Modern period, when second or third-generation members of some of the town's wealthier families built large stylish residences on former farmland just outside the town center. (For comparison, see 60 Sears Road (#93, NR,) and 130 Main Street (#297).

The house was built sometime between 1909 and 1913 on the 26-acre country estate of **Charles Francis Choate, Jr.** (1866-1927), a prominent Boston attorney and founder in 1898 of Choate & Hall, (later Choate, Hall, & Stewart, still one of the largest law firms in Boston. Born in Cambridge, he was the son of attorney and President of the Old Colony Railroad, Charles F. Choate, Sr. (See Area Form M, Chestnut Hill Farm.) He served on the Board of Directors of the New York, New Haven, & Hartford Railroad, as well as on the boards of AT & T and Merchants National Bank of Boston. He also became a director of the Appleton Manufacturing Company in Lowell, and served as its President for many years.

Mr. Choate's reputation as a lawyer was nearly unparalleled in Massachusetts. According to a brief biography, "no one appeared more frequently or with greater distinction before the Supreme Court in Washington" (Washburn.) His early experience was with the development of railroads, and much of his (Cont.)

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

43 Main Street

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24, 25, 646, 647

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

reputation was gained in his role as legal counsel for the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad, which took over the Old Colony and many others in New England. Most of his career was spent as a powerful corporation lawyer, although he did considerable legal counseling for citizens in Southborough, as well.

At his Southborough home, Mr. Choate entertained frequently, and showered lavish hospitality on friends and colleagues, many of them members of the highest Boston society. Here on his estate, and in the company of his family, this powerful attorney showed a warmer, more generous side of his personality. In the words of Robert Washburn, "Those who knew Choate at Southborough only did not know him in Boston, and those who knew him only in Boston did not know him at Southborough . . . . No man knew Choate who did not know him at Southborough."

Mr. Choate served Southborough in many capacities over the years, including as a longtime Selectman and an influential member of various committees. In 1892 he married Louise Burnett, one of the younger daughters of Joseph Burnett (see Form #21, 84 Main Street). Like both his father and father-in-law, Charles Choate, Jr. became one of the town's major benefactors. In 1922 he purchased the former Trowbridge Brigham property at the intersection of Main Street and Cordaville Road and donated the house there to the Southborough Village Society for a Community House (see Form #46). In 1927, shortly before his death, he was honored by being given the position of Master of Ceremonies at the town's 200th anniversary celebrations. His four sons attended the Fay School, and he contributed greatly to that institution, as well. Among the other local recipients of his generosity were St. Mark's Church and St. Mark's School.

Upon their deaths in 1928 and 1929, Mr. and Mrs. Choate left the house and 26.5-acre estate to **St. Mark's School**, which has owned the property since that time. The main house is used for functions and as the headmaster's residence, and seven modest, mid- and late-twentieth-century one- and two-story single-family faculty residences now stand in a semi-circle around it. The stable, which was converted by the school into a single-family dwelling after World War II, is now a two-family faculty residence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

"Choates, a family of great lawyers." Boston Sunday Globe, 12/4/1927.

Choates in America.

Noble, RE. Fences of Stone. 1990.

Rand, One of a Thousand. 1890.

Southborough Historical Society. Old Southborough: a Photographic Essay. 1981.

Town of Southborough: Vital Records; Annual Reports and Tax Valuations, various dates.

Washburn, R.M. "Charles F. Choate, Jr." Washburn's Washington Weekly, 12/5/1927.

Who Was Who in America. Chicago: Marquis, 1973.

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community  
Southborough

Property Address  
43 Main Street

Area(s)

Form No(s).  
24; 25, 646, 647

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible    ☐ Eligible only in a historic district  
☒ Contributing to a potential historic district    ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A    ☐ B    ☒ C    ☐ D

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ A    ☐ B    ☐ C    ☐ D    ☐ E    ☐ F    ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Forbes/Schuler, Consultants

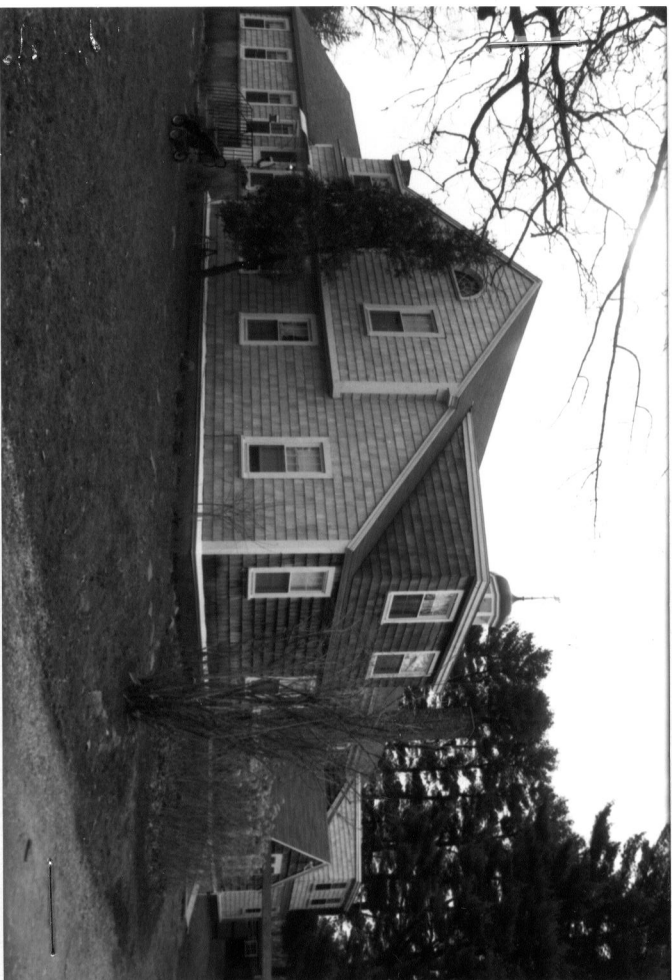
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Charles Choate, Jr. House and stable are eligible individually for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for their association with nationally-known lawyer, and influential local resident and town benefactor Charles F. Choate, Jr. It also meets Criterion A for its establishment as a lavish country retreat by wealthy owners, illustrative of a trend for building gentlemen's estates overlooking the Stony Brook/Wachusett Aqueduct open channel in the early years of the twentieth century. It meets Criterion C as a well preserved, prominent and stylish Colonial Revival country house, complete with its stable, and still occupying its secluded hilltop setting.

For the above reasons, it is also eligible as a contributing property in a district encompassing the historic residential and institutional meetinghouse center of the town.

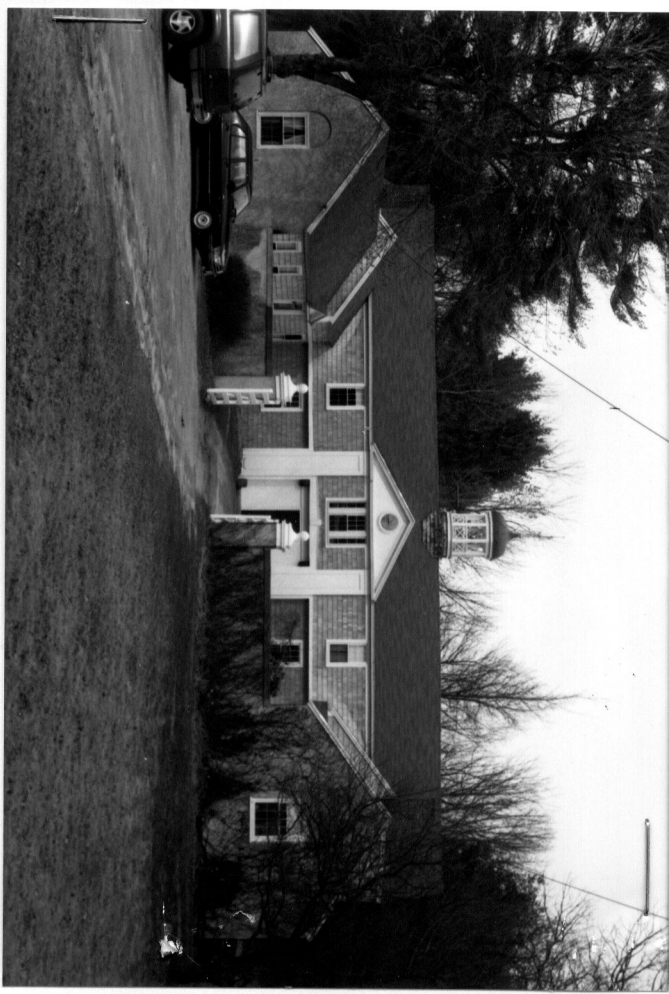
The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.





Choate Stables

Choate stables-garage.



Choate stables



Pl South 24

USPS MAIL	
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City Southborough  
Street address 43 Main St.  
Name Choate House  
Use: original & present dwelling (apts)  
Present owner St. Marks School  
Open to public \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_  
Source of date \_\_\_\_\_  
Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Architectural reason for inventorying: \_\_\_\_\_

OR part of Area # \_\_\_\_\_

3. CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material \_\_\_\_\_

WALL COVER: Wood \_\_\_\_\_ Brick Stone Other Stucco

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard \_\_\_\_\_  
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork \_\_\_\_\_

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 5 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed \_\_\_\_\_

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 \_\_\_\_\_ PORTICO \_\_\_\_\_ Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Front/side Ornament \_\_\_\_\_

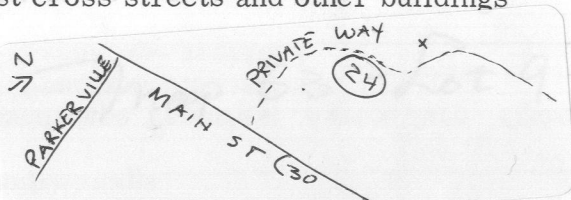
Entrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: Palladian Window

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards \_\_\_\_\_

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street \_\_\_\_\_  
Property has \_\_\_\_\_ feet frontage on street



Recorder \_\_\_\_\_

For \_\_\_\_\_

Photo # 6-31 Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE REVERSE SIDE



## RELATION OF SURROUNDING STRUCTURE

SBR. 24

## 1. Outbuildings

## 2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal

Predominant features

Landscape architect

## 3. Neighboring Structures

Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.  
Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern

Use: Residential Commercial Religious

Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

## RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner:

Deed Information: Book Number Page Registry of Deeds



Pl. SOUTH

25

SBR. 24

Southborough

address 43 Main St

al use Choate House Stables

nt use 2 apartments

nt owner St. Mark's School

o public

Style

Education  
Government  
Literature  
MusicMilitary affairs  
Religion/philosophy  
Indians  
Development of town/city

Source of date

Architect

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added

## 4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material:

WALL COVER: Wood Brick Stone OtherROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard  
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade GrillworkCHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster ElaborateSTORIES: 1 2 3 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed 2

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 PORTICO Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Front Side Ornament: CupolaEntrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: CourtyardWindows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards

5. Indicate location of structure in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

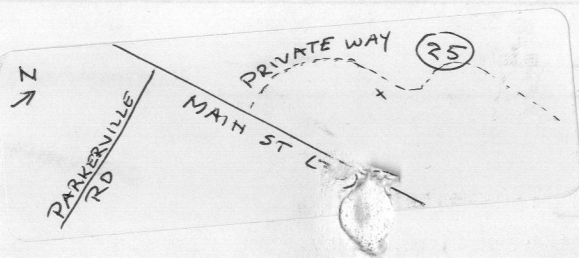
6. Footage of structure from street  
Property has feet frontage on street

Recorder

For

Photo 1-19A Date 1971

SEE REVERSE DE





# RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

SBR. 24

## 1. Outbuildings

## 2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal

Predominant features

Landscape architect

## 3. Neighboring Structures

Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.

Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern

Use: Residential Commercial Religious

Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

## RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner:

Deed Information: Book Number

Page

Registry of Deeds