

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

23-36	Marion	MRN.J	MRN.147
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Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village / Rev. Oliver Cobb

Address: 444 Front Street

Historic Name: James Scott Hammond Pitcher House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1836

Source: Deed and map research

Style/Form: Federal / Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage/apartment (21st century)

Rear garage (1983)

Storage building

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Southwest wing (21st century)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

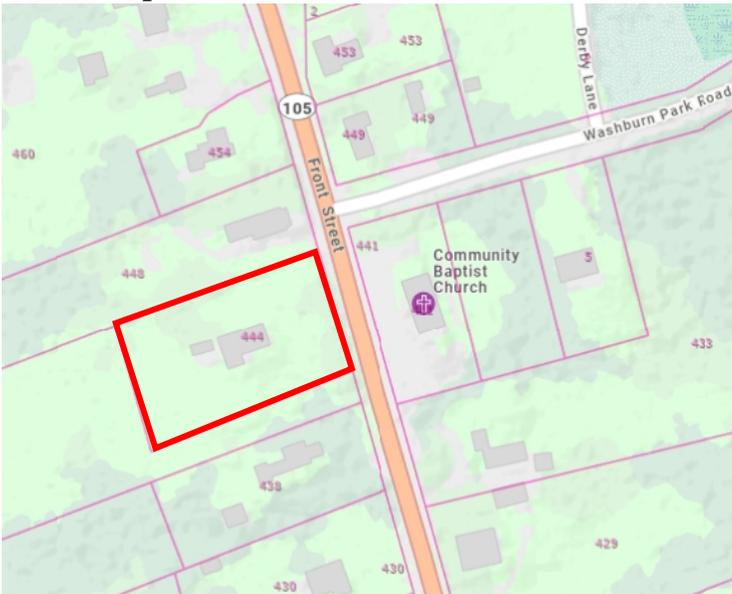
Acreage: 0.84

Setting: Dense linear development of residences developed in the late 18th – late 19th centuries. Housing stock includes mid-sized wood-frame, single-family houses in the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles on small to medium-sized lots.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): August 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

314 Front Street occupies a large rectangular lot on the west side of Front Street and faces east. The house is deeply set back from the street in the center of the parcel. It fronts a large lawn and a tall, manicured hedge that borders the property along Front Street. The front, side and rear yards are maintained in grass dotted with clusters of shrubs and mature trees. A stand of tall trees occupies the westernmost portion of the parcel. Low foundation plantings surround the house. A gravel driveway entering the property from the southeast corner of the parcel sends three offshoots toward the house and then continues the length of the property to end at a garage in the southwest corner of the parcel. The offshoots create a large parking area surrounding the recently-constructed garage apartment sited just south of the south elevation of the house.

This L-shaped wood-frame dwelling comprises a substantial two-story, front-gabled, three-bay-by-three bay main block with a contiguous, two-story, three-bay-by-two-bay southwest wing. The southwest wing, constructed in the 21st century, replaced a shed-roofed ell seen in early photographs of the house. The main block was built around 1836 and represents a blend of the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The house retains the majority of its original character-defining features. The house rests on a granite foundation and is clad in wood clapboards at all elevations. Tall brick chimneys rise from near the eaves at both the north and south roof slopes. The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles.

The house is trimmed with a box cornice, narrow corner boards, and short eave returns. The side hall main entry at the southern-most bay contains a five-panel wood door framed by a narrow, molded surround, partial-height sidelights and an entablature with a paneled architrave. The door fronts a three-step concrete stair and a paved walkway leading to the driveway off the south elevation. The windows at the façade are single, double-hung, one-over-one six-over-six sash with flat surrounds, splayed lintels, and blinds. The majority of windows at the other elevations match those at the façade, although they include several six-over-six fixed sash and none have blinds.

A two-bay-by-two-bay, front-gabled garage/apartment of recent construction is sited in close proximity to the house off its south elevation. It is clad in wood clapboards and simply trimmed. The two paneled garage doors face south and have integrated transoms. The windows comprise double-hung, six-over-six sash with flat surrounds and rectangular eyebrow windows at the frieze boards. The eyebrow windows are a contemporary nod to the Greek Revival style. A one-bay-by-three-bay, side-gabled storage building located at the southwest corner of the house has six-over-six windows and vertical slat doors at the east and west elevations.

444 Front Street is a handsome blend of the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The Federal style (1780 –1820) was the predominant architectural style in the United States during the early decades of the new republic. It was based on simple, rectangular building forms with strictly symmetrical openings, projecting wings, elegant ornamentation, and a general sense of lightness and restraint. Characteristic Federal-style features of this house include the entry surround with entablature and partial-height sidelights, six-over-six window sash, and splayed window lintels. Greek Revival was the predominant style of American architecture from about 1830 to 1850. Inspired by the architecture of ancient Greek temples and associated with democratic ideals, it was widely disseminated through the house plan books of Massachusetts architect Asher Benjamin. The identifying Greek Revival features of this house include the front-gabled orientation of the main block and the six-over-six window sash configuration, which is seen in both Federal and Greek Revival houses.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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.

The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor which leads into Buzzards Bay. The northernmost portion of what has been known historically as Marion's Upper Village runs along Front Street from the intersection of Front and Spring Streets to Interstate 195. Less than a mile from the Rochester town line, the Rev. Oliver Cobb Area, where this building is located, is centered along Front Street immediately north of the Old Depot area, the former site of the rail station. It is so named because the late 18th-century home of Oliver Cobb, the first minister of Marion's First Congregational Church, was located here at 460 Front Street (1799, Rev. Oliver Cobb House, MRN.149). Initially Oliver Cobb served both the church at Rochester and the one at Marion, and this house, his parsonage, was situated at a convenient mid-point between the two churches. A sparsely settled agricultural area during the 18th and early 19th centuries, its rapid residential development began in the mid-1800s. There are two late 18th century buildings in this small area, including the Cobb house and the Hammett House at 429 Front Street (late 18th c., MRN.144). The mostly modest residences in this area were built throughout the 19th and into the early 20th centuries.

J.S.H. Pitcher is shown as the owner of this house on the 1855 map. His heirs are the labeled owners on the 1879 map, and on the 1903 map the owner is the estate of Justus Briggs. The first recorded conveyance found for this property was from farmer Joseph Hammatt to his son-in-law James Scott Hammond Pitcher in 1835.

James Scott Hammond Pitcher (1800-1874) was married to Anna Claghorn Hammatt (1807-1873), daughter of Hannah Claghorn Hammatt (1788-1857) and Joseph Hammatt (1780-1853). [Note: In the various title and biographical resources concerning the Hammatt family, their surname is variously spelled Hammat, Hammatt, Hammet, and Hammett. For the purposes of consistency, Hammatt will be used in this form.] Joseph Hammatt was from Martha's Vineyard, the son of Joseph Hammatt (1753-1781) and Abigail Daggett (1759-1813). The younger Joseph Hammatt was a farmer according to the 1850 census. Joseph Hammatt sold this parcel of land to his son-in-law James S.H. Pitcher, a seaman, in 1835 for \$262.50. Hammatt's deed makes no mention of a building. Anna and James Pitcher had a daughter, Frances B. Pitcher (1831-1910); Frances was born in Lyon, France, suggesting that she may have been adopted. Frances Pitcher was married in 1877 to Joseph Vodworka (1832-1924) and the couple appeared to occupy the house until their deaths. The property was sold at auction in 1883 by the trustee of their estate, Captain Stephen D. Hadley, for \$2,300 to Justus Briggs, Sr.

Justus [var. Justice] Allen Briggs, Sr., whose family owned this house well into the 20th century, was born in 1837, the son of Elnathan Briggs (1808-1896) and Rhoda Delano Allen (1821-1897). He was married to Polly Maria Ellis (1840-1921), the daughter of Stephen Ellis (1873-1874) and Lucy Delano (1796-1887) of Rochester. The 1880 census reports Brigg's occupation as sea captain. The property was devised by Briggs to one of his sons, Walton E. Briggs (1881-1923) and his wife Sarah Eveline Hathaway (1886-1957). Walton E. Briggs was a teacher in the Plymouth public schools; his sister Bessie E. Briggs was also a schoolteacher according to the 1910 census. Walton's brother, Justus Allen Briggs, Jr. (1870-1944), was a lawyer and lived in New Bedford.

The property left the Briggs family in 1944 when it was sold to Ernest and Helen Downer. Ernest Downer died in 1959, and his widow continued to own the property until 1985 when it was conveyed to the couple's son Gordon Parks Downer. It was purchased by the current owners in 2014.

Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
09-24-2014	44780-28	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills	Jenna J. Gorraiz
07-12-2010	38724-100	Gordon Parks Downer	Norman A. & Helen A. Hills
03-04-1985	5999-297	Richard W. Paull	Gordon Parks & Helen H. Downer
03-04-1985	5999-296	Helen H. Downer	Richard W. Paul
08-26-1980	4870-139	Helen H. Downer	Stephen H. Downer & Gordon Parks Downers
04-17-1944	1864-121	Walton E., Jr. & Sarah E. Briggs	Ernest P. & Helen H. Downer
Probate		Estate of Justus Briggs, Sr.	Walton E., Jr. & Sarah E. Briggs
03-07-1883	491-318	Estate of James S.H. Pitcher	Justus Briggs, Sr.

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South and east elevations. Garage/apartment in foreground and storage building at lower left.

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began in the mid-1800s. The area is so named because the late 18th-century home of Oliver Cobb, the first minister of Marion's First Congregational Church, was located here at 460 Front Street (ca.1799, Rev. Oliver Cobb House, MRN.149). The potential district's boundaries are those defined in the 1998 MHC survey for the Rev. Oliver Cobb Area (MRN.J).

Under Criterion A, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level for its association with Rev. Oliver Cobb, who simultaneously served both the Congregational church at Rochester and the one at Marion in the early 19th century. His house, the late 18th century parsonage at 460 Front Street, was situated at a convenient mid-point between the two churches.

Under Criterion C, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level in the area of Architecture for its collection of architecturally significant houses dating from the late 18th to the late 19th centuries. These include two distinguished Federal style properties, the Rev. Oliver Cobb House and the Hammatt House at 429 Front Street (late 18th c., MRN.144), along with houses in the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles.

The majority of the resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The district would likely meet criteria A and C at the local level, with areas of significance in social history and architecture.