

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

7-23	Marion		MRN.654
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Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Sippican Neck

Address: 683 Point Road

Historic Name: Union Chapel – John M. & Ruth C. Berto House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: School / Chapel

Date of Construction: First half of 19th century

Source: Map research, visual analysis

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete block
Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood
Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage

Photograph



Locus Map



Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Conversion to residence & south wing (1959-early 1960s)

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:** Rotated 90 degrees to the south (ca. 1959)

Acreage: 0.49

Setting: Moderately settled area developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with summer residences. Housing stock comprises moderate- to large-sized houses on large lots. Terrain characterized by dense woods at the central portion of the peninsula bordered by marshland and beach along the shoreline perimeter.

Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): June 2024

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

683 Point Road

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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.

683 Point Road occupies a trapezoidal lot at the northeast corner of the intersection of Point Road and Cross Neck Road. The dwelling is roughly positioned at the center of the parcel and faces west. Scattered foundation plantings span the façade (west elevation). The property is maintained primarily in lawn dotted by shrubs and mature trees. The eastern and southern boundaries are heavily vegetated. A gravel driveway enters the property diagonally from the corner of Point and Cross Neck Roads, serves a garage sited off the southeast corner of the house, and ends in a parking area at the south elevation of the dwelling.

This structure, a former front-gabled school house, dates to the first half of the 19th century. It was reoriented on the parcel and converted to a side-gabled dwelling in the mid-20th century, taking on the appearance of a three-quarter Cape house (four bays wide with off-center entry. The dwelling comprises a one-and-one-half-story, four-bay-by-two-bay, side-gabled main block with a one-story south wing. The house rests on a concrete block foundation. The walls are clad in wood shingles and the roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney rises from the roof ridge of the main block near the south gable end, and a gable-wall chimney rises from grade at the north end. A painting of the building (see image below) while being used as a chapel provides evidence that the south gable end of the structure originally faced Point Road.

Trim elements at the house include corner and frieze boards and eave returns. The windows at all locations are single or paired, double-hung six-over-six sash with flat surrounds and blinds. The main entry is located at the second-most northerly bay at the façade. It is framed by a Colonial Revival surround comprising narrow fluted pilasters and a deep molded entablature. The door fronts a shallow concrete stoop.

The south wing of the house is centered on the south elevation of the main block. It is two bays by four bays with a gullwing extension at the east elevation. An entry at the south wall opens to a brick stoop and step that joins the driveway.

A side-gabled one-car garage is sited off the southeast corner of the house at the eastern property line. It is clad in stucco and has an asphalt shingle roof.

683 Point Road reflects the results of a 20th century Colonial Revival reconfiguration of a mid-19th century building. The two-part frieze boards and eave returns at the main block suggest that the original building was designed in the Greek Revival style. The Colonial Revival period in America (1880–1955) saw a resurgence of patriotism and a return to the architectural styles of the early years of the republic. Combining the classical architectural elements of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival periods, the Colonial Revival style was the most popular style in America for private and public buildings between the World Wars. The characteristic Colonial Revival features of this house include its three-quarter Cape form, trim elements including the main entry surround, and six-over-six window sash configuration.

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 peninsulas, called necks, surrounding Sippican Harbor remained largely undeveloped until the last quarter of the 19th century. The land was used for common pasturage, and salt marsh hay was a principal crop. Sippican Neck, which bounds the harbor on the east, is shown to be sparsely settled on the 1855 map. Early Marion families including the Blankinships, Briggses, and Ellises were among the few property owners in the area. The 1879 map shows the neck still largely undeveloped, but by 1903 growth of the area is seen along the northwestern shoreline with numerous residences on large parcels facing the harbor.

Continuation sheet 1

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Over the ensuing decades Sippican Neck became almost completely developed, with numerous seasonal properties on the waterfront. Point Road, where the subject house is located, runs north from Butler’s Point (also called Ruggles Point) at the south end of the neck to County Road, where it terminates.



1879 map.

The subject house appears on the 1855 and 1879 maps labeled “School.” On the 1903 map, the building is noted to be a chapel. The earliest conveyance found for the property in a clear chain of ownership was its sale in 1889 by the Town of Marion to the Union Chapel Association. Records in the collection of the Sippican Historical Society state that the building was used as a school from at least 1855 through 1889, when it was acquired by the Union Chapel Association. In 1916 it was sold to William M. Bullivant.

William Maurice Bullivant (1858-1939) was born in New Jersey and moved with his family to Boston as a boy. He entered the leather business and eventually became the founder and president of the Northwestern Leather Company.¹ Bullivant began summering in Marion in the early 1890s, and soon became active in the local real estate market.² According to the 1998 MHC Area Form MRN.M for the West Drive area, over time he acquired more than 450 acres of property in Great Neck. Bullivant was the owner of several other East Marion properties including 669 Point Road (ca. 1797, Ephraim Allen – Capt. Edwy E. Hammond/Clement M. Hammond House, MRN.57) and the adjacent house at 2 West Drive (ca. 1900, William M. Bullivant House, MRN. 174). William Bullivant was first married to Libbie Priscilla Lodge (1859-1911) of Boston and later to Susan Ross (1857-

1937) of Portland, Maine. Records at the Sippican Historical Society note that the building was used as a chapel for Friends Meetings from 1938 to 1948 during the ownership of the Bullivant heirs, who may have made it available for their use.

The property was sold in 1958 by Bullivant’s children to John M. and Ruth C. Berto. John Berto was born in Portugal and worked as a gardener/caretaker at a private estate. The Bertos turned the building 90 degrees orienting its side elevation to the street, extended it, and converted it to residential use. A watercolor painting of the building when it served as a chapel was provided by the property owner on the day of the site visit and is included in this report. The property remains in Berto family ownership.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
09-24-2012	41985-336	Warren C. & Joy A. Berto	Warren C. & Joy A. Berto
08-18-1975	4092-164	Ruth C. Berto	Ruth C., Warren C. & Joy A. Berto
09-18-1958	2656-59	W. Malcolm Bullivant et al.	John M. & Ruth C. Berto
09-16-1916	1260-100	Union Chapel Association	William M. Bullivant
02-11-1889	571-350	Town of Marion	Union Chapel Association

¹ “William M. Bullivant,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA, May 29, 1939.

² “Marion Man Dies Suddenly,” *The Standard-Times*, New Bedford, MA, May 28, 1939.

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683 Point Road

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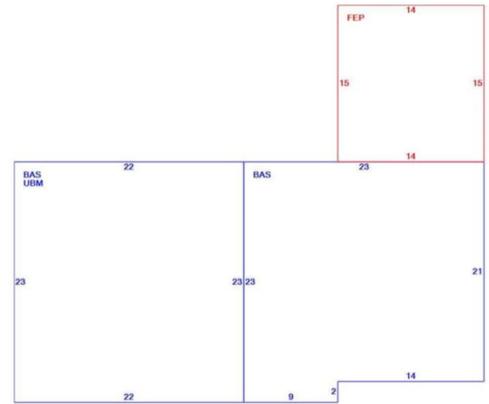
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Assessor's card plan



Image shared by Joy Berto, 6.20.24.



West (facade) and east elevations.