

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	HIN.493
Historic Name:	Gordon, Dr. William House
Common Name:	
Address:	235 Main St
City/Town:	Hingham
Village/Neighborhood:	Hingham;
Local No:	185;
Year Constructed:	1809
Architectural Style(s):	Federal;
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture;
Area(s):	HIN.G, HIN.N
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (07/28/1988); Nat'l Register District (01/07/1991);
Building Materials:	Wall: Brick; Wood; Wood Clapboard;
Demolished	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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AP - HNB
USGS - WEY
HIN. 493

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA FORM NO.

G.N 493

LHD - 7/28/88
NRDIS - 1/7/91

Hingham

235 Main Street

2C

Historic Name Dr. William Gordon House

Present Single residence

Original Single residence

CONSTRUCTION

1809

Julian C. Loring records

Federal

Object

Exterior Wall Fabric Brick ends and clapboards

Outbuildings Italianate clapboarded barn

with original chevron doors, post 1876.

Major Alterations (with dates) The addition of a large 2-story wing to the rear.

Condition Excellent

Moved No Date _____

Acres 136,343 sq. ft.

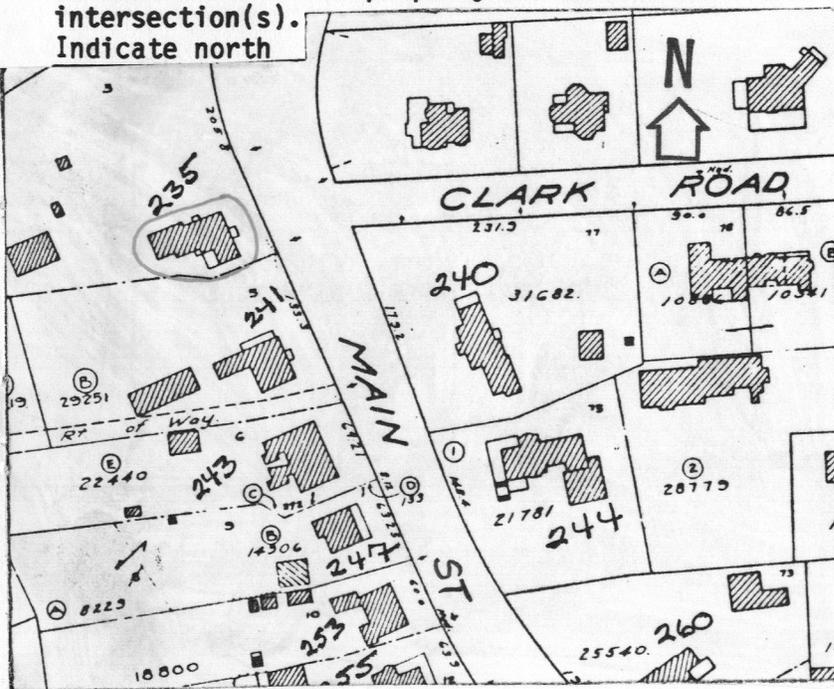
Setting Large three-acre property near crest of Pear Tree Hill, the first rise of Main Street. North elevation faces a kettle hole.

Recorded by Fannin-Lehner

Organization Hingham Historical Commission

Date February 12, 1988

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north



UTM REFERENCE _____

USGS QUADRANGLE _____

SCALE _____

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important other buildings within the community.

SEE INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET



ms of

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Dr. William Gordon (1783-1851) built the Federal house at 235 Main Street in 1809 and was for more than thirty years a practicing physician in Hingham. In 1833 he went into practice with his son, Dr. Charles Gordon (1809-1872), who in 1837 opened a boarding house for the insane in Hingham known as "Hapgood House." Dr. William Gordon moved to Boston in 1838 and later to Taunton.

Following Dr. William Gordon's departure, the house at 235 Main Street was rented to Dr. Ezra Stephenson (1805-1874) who in 1851 built an Italianate house at 244 Main Street. Pear Tree Hill, so named for the pear orchards of the Cushing family, was also known as "Doctor's Hill." Other nearby physicians located at Pear Tree Hill were Dr. James Robbins, who built 218 Main Street in 1887, Dr. David L. Belding, who converted a wheelwright shop into the residence at 219 Main Street in 1927, and Dr. Stephenson at 244 Main Street.

In 1840, Dr. Gordon sold 235 Main Street to his son-in-law, George A. Crocker, who kept the property until 1852. "Gentleman" and merchant John Sturgis Nye (1812-1882) purchased the property, keeping it until his own death, thirty years later in 1882. John Sturgis Nye was descended from early settler Cornelius Nye (d. 1749) who arrived in Hingham in 1718 and Sturgis heirs retained the parcel until after 1904. MJF

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Hingham Historical Society Pilgrimage, June 13, 1984.
- Hingham Gazette, Jan. 27, 1837.
- Hingham Journal. March 5, 1852; Aug. 20, 1852; April 7, 1876; Sept. 9, 1898; Sept. 23, 1898; May 2, 1902; July 25, 1902; Jan. 29, 1987.
- Hingham Patriot, Dec. 1, 1838; Jan. 19, 1844.
- Lincoln, George. History of the Town of Hingham: The Genealogies, 1892, reprint ed., 1982, vol. 11, p. 277; vol. 111, p. 97, 188.
- Julian C. Loring Records
- Town of Hingham, Building Permit #99, Sept. 9, 1937.
- John P. Richardson Archival Collection

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

HN:493

Community: Hingham	Form No:
Property Name:	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE 235 Main Street
Dr. William Gordon House

The Federal Style, 1775-1830, characterized by elegance and refinement in proportions and ornamental vocabulary, is the dominant period style in Hingham, with over one hundred and sixty examples. This classically derived style, rooted in the architecture of the past colonial era, represents a stylistic evolution; the rectangular block-type braced-frame construction house with its door in the center of the long side continues without interruption. At the same time, a new concept of proportion and scale was developed; it utilized a system of ornament based on measured drawings of the new type of traveler-scholar-gentlemen, Robert Adam in England and Charles Bulfinch in New England. Characteristic details include delicate elliptical fanlights and sidelights, and brick ends to accommodate end chimneys. One of the major changes from Colonial to Federal is the planar quality of the symmetrical facade and the replacement of the ridge roof with a hip roof, emphasizing the desired horizontality of the building.

The 1809 Dr. William Gordon House is one of the finest unaltered Federal residences in Hingham; it was described in the January 19, 1844 Hingham Patriot as a "genteel dwelling house." Its double cube massing, delineated by quoins, similar to that of 126 Main Street, is an imposing presence on Pear Tree Hill. Brick ends which contain two tall chimneys contrast attractively with the painted clapboards of the facade. The salient characteristics of the style include the low-pitch hip roof, the plain cornice board at the eaves, the simple window enframements and the beautifully composed entrance, the focus of the house's architectural ornamentation (see photograph). The paneled door is topped by a delicate elliptical fanlight filled with tracery and framed with plain sidelights to dado level. Protecting this entrance is a classical portico, supported by attenuated fluted Doric columns under a plain entablature. It is one of Hingham's rare period porticos, one which was built at the time of the original construction, rather than added later, as are the majority of Hingham's classical front vestibules. The Dr. William Gordon House is an important component in the proposed Pear Tree Hill Local Historic District. MBL



HIN. 493 (493)

Hingham 185

235 Main St.

Dr. Wm. Gordon

Use Dwelling

Use Dwelling

Owner Leighton

1809 Style Federal

Date

Text

5. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor Very Poor Moved Altered

IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material:

WALL COVER: Wood Brick Stone Other

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency Simple/Complex

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony Recessed

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

FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament

Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features:

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured

OUTBUILDINGS LANDSCAPING

5. Indicate location of structure on map below 6. Footage of structure from street Property has feet frontage on street

Recorder

For SEP 1967

68,1129 68,1130

Photo VII 21,22 E-12-131-1-185

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)

FOR USE WITH IMPORTANT STRUCTURE

Fireplace

Stairway

Other

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORY
on theme circled on front of form



1966

Annual House Tour

REFERENCE (Where was the house located?)

NO. 3

Home of Mrs. Paul E. Leighton

235 Main Street

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Built in 1809 by Dr. Timothy Gordon, this lovely Federal house was originally a four room, brick-ended house with a kitchen ell. The porch has coupled columns, fan light and side lights. The entrance hall has a graceful stairway with a lovely curved wall and a window at the landing.

The parlour at the left of the front hall has fluted pilasters at the six windows and at the fireplace. The room at the right has inside shutters, and both rooms have handsome dados and cornices.

Among the many pieces of handsome furniture, there is an inlaid music stand in the music room, a heart-shaped fire screen in the parlour, as well as an English tall case clock and a Chippendale tilt top table.

Original Owner: _____
Deed Information: Book _____