

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

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Town: Tewksbury

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)
Tewksbury Center

Address: 24 Helvetia Street

Historic Name: John Harper Gale House

Uses: Present: Single Family Residential

Original: Single Family Residential

Date of Construction: c1932

Source: Deed Research, Assessor's & Census
Records

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Parged Concrete

Wall/Trim: Aluminum Siding

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

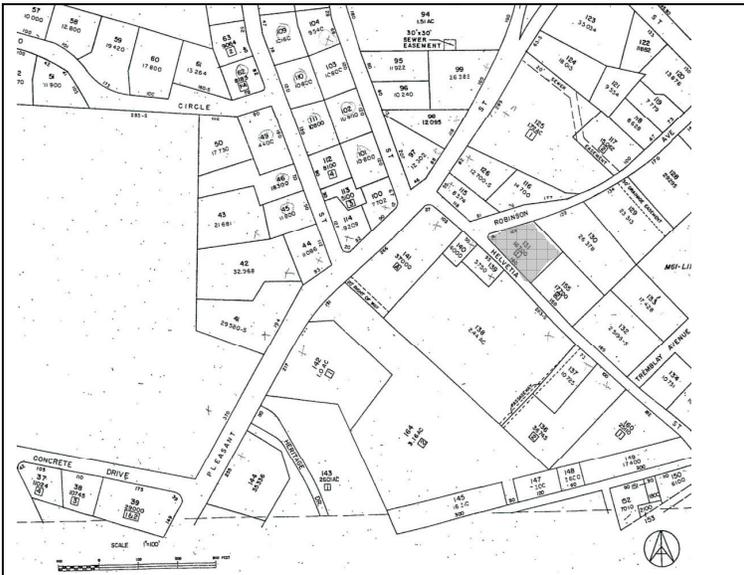
Condition: Fair

Moved: no | X | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 0.38 Acres

Setting: Set near the street in a primarily residential area.

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Julie Ann Larry

Organization: ttl-architects

Date (*month / year*): March 2010

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TEWKSBURY

24 HELVETIA STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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.

The Colonial Revival house at 24 Helvetia Street is two stories in height. The two by two bay building rests on a concrete foundation that has been parged and painted. The side gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. An exterior brick chimney is located on the north side of the main building form. On the north and south sides of the main rectangular form is a one story addition with a hip roof. The main (west) façade is asymmetrical. The side hall entry is protected by an arched projecting roof supported by large brackets. To the north of the door is a projecting bay sheltered by a shed roof. The door features small rectangular glass panes above long wood panels. Windows are 6/6 replacement sash windows. Windows are flanked by shutters.

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 residence is one of several properties near the corner of Pleasant and Helvetia Streets that are associated with the Gale family. John T Gale of Lowell purchased a large lot of land from Perry Jefferson (MHC# TEW.39) in 1904. The deed indicates that the land came with the promise to lay out a portion of a new road (Helvetia Street) from Chandler Street to Pleasant Street.

Between 1890 and 1915 the Town of Tewksbury began to develop as a market gardening community. Greenhouses for nurseries and market gardening were constructed throughout the town to grow produce to sell in nearby cities. John T Gale Sons Wholesale Florist was established on the west side of the newly laid out Helvetia Street c1905. Between WWI and WWII Tewksbury became known as a carnation town as many of the town's green houses produced flowers commercially. The existing garage building at 35 Helvetia Street was built during this period of expansion for the local floral industry c 1930. In the late 20th century many of these greenhouse operations were abandoned. While some greenhouses have been completely demolished and others remain unused and deteriorating, the Gale greenhouse operation is still active. The existing greenhouses were installed in 1981. Cut flowers grown by John T Gale Sons include sweet peas and snap dragons.

John T Gale was born in England in 1875 and immigrated to America c1885¹. He was living in Tewksbury by 1900 where he was working as a laborer in a nursery. In 1901 he lived on Main Street. He married his first wife, Edna Harper in 1903 and their daughter Thelma was born the same year. They had three additional children: John Harper (1909-1999), Richmond (1911), and Edna (1913). Edna Harper Gale died c1914 and John T Gale married his second wife, Zorah, c1915.

Gale and his family members built several houses nearby including the John T Gale House at 82 Pleasant Street (built 1920-1930) **TEW.**; the Thelma [Gale] Green House at 11 Helvetia Street **TEW.**; the Richmond T Gale House at 17 Helvetia Street, and the John Harper Gale House at 24 Helvetia Street.

The house at **24 Helvetia Street TEW.** was given to John Harper Gale by his father. The Town's Assessor's records indicate the house was built c 1932. This appears to be a correct date given the style of the house, the 1930 census data when J Harper Gale was residing with his parents on Pleasant Street and the appearance of the house on a 1936 plan of Helvetia Street. J. Harper Gale was the husband of Gladys E. (Hardy) Gale. He attended Tewksbury schools and graduated from Lowell High School and the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He worked with his father and brother Richmond at John T. Gale Sons, Wholesale Florists. He served on the Tewksbury School Committee for more than 12 years, the chairman of the Tewksbury

¹ 1910 United States Federal Census Record. Other census records indicate a different immigration date. In 1900, immigration in 1890 while the 1920 and 1930 census indicates an immigration in 1891.

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Cemetery Commission c1999, and was a member and past master of the Wamesit Masonic Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Tewksbury. He and his wife had two daughters and one son.



(L-R) John Harper Gale, Richmond Gale, Thelma Gale, Edna Gale [circa: 1919-1920] Tewksbury Historical Society Collection, 2001²

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

U.S. Census Records. 1790-1930.

Directories. 1896-97, 1898-99, 1900-01, 1911-12, 1913-14, 1915-16, 1919, 1927, 1930-31, 1932-33, 1937-38, 1940-41, 1942-1943, 1949 [Ancestry], 1953, 1955, 1961, and 1967.

Map of the Town of Tewksbury 1852. Henry F Walling. Boston, MA.

1865 Map of Tewkesbury with inset.

Atlas of Middlesex County 1875. FW Beers.

Atlas of Middlesex County 1889. Geo H Walker & Co.

List of Residents by Streets, Ages 17 years and over, In the Town of Tewksbury Mass. As prepared by the Board of Registrars (various years 1965-)

Valuations of the Real and Personal Estate of the Town of Tewksbury. 1890. 1940. 1960.

North Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.

Ancestry.com

Tewksbury Advertiser 2/11/99

² The Tewksbury Town Crier Sunday, January 11, 2009 10:06 AM EST

http://www.homenewshere.com/articles/2009/01/31/tewksbury_town_crier/news/doc496956a3679e8853664739 prt 4/2/2010