

Then & Now - Mt. Pleasant House 34 Goodnow Rd.



On the north part of the old Gleason farm that fronted on Goodnow Road, where Thomas Gleason had built a farmstead in the late 18th century (since demolished), his son **Rufus Gleason** and Rufus's son-in-law **Charles Whittaker**, (husband of Rufus's daughter, Abigail), built a large new house between 1857 and 1860. In 1868, right before the train came through Princeton in 1871, Charles

Whittaker enlarged the building and opened it as a summer boarding house, which he named the Mount Pleasant House.

While Princeton has many surviving examples of the Second Empire style that epitomized the town's hotel era, only two are located in the West Village, and those were once parts of a single building that grew in size during several construction phases between 1857 and the 1880s. The Mount Pleasant boarding house/hotel began as a large double house in the late 1850s. It apparently acquired its mansard-



This Section Was Moved in 1912 to #26 Goodnow Rd

roofed third story as part of a major expansion into a hotel in 1875. The present single-family house at #26 and the condominium complex at 34 Goodnow Road are the two main sections of the hotel at the size it had attained by the early 20th century. In 1912, the building was split apart. The east half was separated from the west and moved 200 yards east towards Princeton Center onto a new granite foundation. A large ell dating to about 1887 was moved across Goodnow Road to a site with access from Hubbardston Road.

The relocated east portion, 26 Goodnow Road, is the most intact of the three surviving sections. The front, mansard-roofed part of the house has an L-plan, with a four-bay main façade and a two-bay section projecting forward from its east end. A large two-



Portion of Mount Pleasant Left After Being Divided

story wing, six bays long and with a shallow gabled roof, extend to the rear. A circa 1912 hip-roofed verandah or “piazza” wraps around the southwest corner of the building, extending from the projecting southeast bay across the façade and along the west side, where a later balcony rests upon its roof. Another section of verandah is located along the east side of the main building, ending at a forward-facing northeast ell. The windows are 2/2 sashes, with heavy molded crowns. The dormer windows at the third story have shallow gabled roofs, also finished with a heavy molding. Other architectural details, including the quoined corners and the paired saw cut brackets at the deeply projecting eaves, are also characteristic of the Second Empire style. The

main mansard roof is slate; other roof sections appear to be asphalt shingle. The front door is an early 20th-century replacement in the Craftsman style, with eight lights over two long panels. (The larger, two-car garage has a sliding recessed-panel door.)

The relocated ell, now at 90 Hubbardston Road, circa 1887, was the Whitney Farmhouse. It is a side-gabled shingled house set well back from Hubbardston Road has at its core the 1887 ell of the former Mt. Pleasant House that was moved down to this location when the former hotel was split apart in 1912. It later acquired extensions of various heights on all four sides, including a hexagonal two-story turret at the southeast corner, and a 1 ½-story addition off the east end that has a large round-headed window under a gabled roof. A long gable-roofed vertical-board barn, was also moved to the site in 1912 from Goodnow Road, is set back behind the house and is barely visible from the road. It apparently dates to the third quarter of the 19th century when it served as the farm for the Mount Pleasant House.

Lastly the main, unmoved section at 34 Goodnow Road was a single family home, which fell into disrepair until it was sold and converted into condominiums.

Mt. Pleasant House Advertisement

"Mr. Charles A. Whittaker opened his new house for boarders in 1868. The spot selected



26 Goodnow Rd. After Being Moved & Rotated 90 Degrees

for this summer hotel was an ideal one. Situated three fourths of a mile west of the Post Office, it stands on an elevation commanding a beautiful view of the surrounding country with forest, orchard and mowing land in close proximity, and was appropriately named 'Mt. Pleasant House.' The business

proved so successful that Mr. Whittaker

built extensive additions in 1875. Other enlargements were made from time to time until from forty to sixty guests were accommodated. Mr. Moses C. Goodnow, son-in-law of Mr. Whittaker, took charge of the business in 1879 until 1908.

After this a portion of the house was let to different parties for the summer months. In the spring of 1912 Mr. Goodnow sold the property to Edward C. and Harry S. Whitney of Worcester, who made radical changes in the premises. They moved a portion of the house to an adjoining lot where Edward C. spent the greater part of the year. Harry Whitney then remodeled the main house and he occupied this delightful country home for years."

What The Worcester Columbian Tribute Wrote About the Mt. Pleasant House circa 1890

"This hotel is delightfully situated in the midst of a farm of 150 acres. The house itself stands on a lawn surrounded by a beautiful grove, and though charmingly retired from the main road, is so situated as to catch the cool southwesterly breezes. This is in every respect a truly comfortable home, and has borne a high reputation for over twenty years. It has fifty-five well furnished rooms, and its genial proprietor, Mr. C. A. Whittaker, makes the comfort of his guests his constant study."



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