

Abbot era passes as estate sold

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Sun Correspondent

WESTFORD — The Abbot mansion, a landmark in Westford Center for nearly a century, has been sold.

Zolton A. and Edith A. Phillips, the new owners of the stately home at Main Street and Graniteville Road, arrived recently, signaling the passing of a long era of Abbots in this town.

Along with memories, the only vestige of the Abbot name, prominent for eight generations, is the designation of a middle school at the center and a street sign in Forge Village.

All the Abbots were active in town affairs. They were well-educated and affluent. There were teachers, lawyers, a minister and later mill owners. The Abbot Worsted Mills started in Graniteville, expanded to Forge Village and Brookside and later to Lowell.

The Phillips family also hopes to take a prominent part in the community. After living in North San Diego County, Calif., they have decided that Westford, a typical New England town, is the best place for themselves and their five children to live.

Phillips is in the construction business, specializing in industrial warehouses.

The Phillips children have selected Boston University and Lawrence Academy for their education. Joseph "Joe" studies film production and Julie is taking pre-med courses in Boston; Jennifer is a junior, Zolton III a sophomore and Janna a freshman at Groton.

Sale price \$700,000

Anne Hockmeyer of Emerson Real Estate handled the property sale. The reported price was \$700,000.

The mansion has 20 rooms and was the dream home of Abiel Jacob Abbot and his wife, the former Mary Alice Mosely of Newburyport. It is a classic



The Abiel J. Abbot house on Graniteville Road

turn-of-the-century manor home. Its 18 acres lie in the heart of Abbot's native town.

Construction started in 1890, and it was 13 months before Abbot and his bride could move into the new home.

A visitor entering the Abbot home first would be impressed with the large hallway opening to a formal living room with sunporch beyond and a den filled with mementos of the Abbots' travels and hunting and fishing trophies. Opposite is the formal dining room.

An elaborate staircase leads to the second floor and four master bedrooms. Seven more bedrooms are on the third floor. Carefully detailed fireplaces dominate the principal rooms. A billiards room and double vaulted wine cellar, amply supplied by S.S. Pierce of Boston and usually kept well secured in Abbot's day, are located in the basement.

A well-groomed front lawn is contained by a fieldstone wall. From an impressive pillared veranda at the back of the house, one can look over formal gardens, manicured lawns and well-attended meadows to the southern foothills of the New Hampshire White Mountains. A tennis court is tucked in a corner.

When the estate came on the market it was shown to at least

50 prospective buyers, most of whom were interested in the property for business reasons. Some thought it could be turned into an inn with bed and breakfast or an executive retreat for conferences. Others thought it might be rearranged for condominiums, a nursing home or perhaps a rehabilitation center.

When it was announced the

Abbot mansion would continue as a family unit, many expressed a feeling of relief, perhaps if only for sentimental reasons.

A section of land lies at the end of Connell Drive with more a bit to the rear of the church. Phillips intends to divide this unused portion — about eight acres — of the estate into house lots for "substantial" homes.