

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED JUN 20 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Strawberry Banke Historic District

AND/OR COMMON Strawberry Banke Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Bounded by Court, Marcy, Hancock and Washington Streets

CITY, TOWN Portsmouth VICINITY OF First

STATE New Hampshire CODE 33 COUNTY Rockingham CODE 015

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Local Historic District

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME See Continuation Sheet #1

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rockingham County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER Rockingham County Courthouse
Hampton Road

CITY, TOWN

Exeter

STATE

New Hampshire 03833

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE See Continuation Sheet #2

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Strawberry Banke historic district is an area of approximately 12.08 acres, located in the South End of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The district contains a gridwork of streets (five running generally east and west, and six running north and south) with 34 dwelling houses and some five auxiliary structures used for historical purposes. It also includes eight privately-owned houses with their ancillary structures. The total number of buildings in the district is 50. According to the best information currently available, the median date of the houses in the district is 1792.¹ The area lies immediately south of the section of Portsmouth that was burned in a major fire in 1813, but most of the Strawberry Banke district was unaffected by the fire. Therefore, the area is characterized by narrower streets than are found in the central part of the city, and by wood-frame building construction, as opposed to the brick construction that was rebuilt in the fire zone after 1813. Like much of the surrounding South End of Portsmouth, then, the Strawberry Banke area represents a survival of eighteenth century architectural forms and town planning practices that are not to be found elsewhere in the city.

1. General Description of Architecture: With the exception of two brick buildings, the houses in the Strawberry Banke district utilize the form of wood-frame construction known as the braced frame. The major framing members of the buildings are invariably hewn with broad-axe or adze until about 1800, after which a few sawn elements occasionally appear. Smaller framing elements (such as studs and some joists) are frequently sawn even in the pre-Revolutionary period. The use of true plank wall construction is not seen within the Strawberry Banke area, all outer walls and interior partitions being framed with vertical studs covered with horizontal sheathing, clapboards, and laths. Stud wall construction appears even in the earliest Strawberry Banke dwelling, the Capt. John Sherburne House of c. 1695.²

The majority of the early houses within the Strawberry Banke area, some 14, are or originally were of the central-chimney type. Another 9 are of the "double house" type, with two chimneys and a central hallway. Still others are of various Federal types, with chimneys located on their outer walls.

¹ Nancy Beck, ed., The Strawberry Banke Guidebook, third revised edition (Portsmouth, N. H.: Strawberry Banke, Inc., 1971), passim.

² Richard Candee, "The John Sherburne House, Strawberry Banke, Inc." unpublished report, 1968, p. 15.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Urban Planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Concise Statement of Significance: The Strawberry Banke historic district is significant as the area of Portsmouth that was first settled in 1630; as part of the only remaining seventeenth and eighteenth century section of the city; and as the only district in northern New England where a full range of historic buildings, of widely varying dates, styles, and degrees of sophistication, are available for public inspection. It is further significant as a focal point of early commercial development in northern New England; as the locus of numerous events and processes of social, cultural and political importance in the history of the region; and as the point where several approaches to historic preservation were practiced in the twentieth century.

2. Origins and Historical Developments of the District: As a focal point of settlement, the Strawberry Banke historic district traces its origin to 1630. In that year or shortly thereafter, the settlers constructed a communal dwelling know as a "Great House" approximately upon the site of present-day building IV.¹ This site for initial settlement was chosen, apparently, because of its closeness to the Creek (later know as Puddle Dock), which offered a sheltered haven for small vessels, and to the Great Field, a tract of naturally-cleared land that allowed an immediate beginning to agriculture. As the neighborhood grew (see 7. DESCRIPTION, Section 8., Original Appearance), it became the focus for much of the commercial and craft activity of the new settlement, though it was not the only section of the town in which a concentration of dwellings developed.² The area became the home of noted

¹ Richard Candee, "The John Sherburne House, Strawberry Banke, Inc.," unpublished report, 1968, p. 5.

² James L. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture," Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 2 (Summer, 1971), p. 44.

Continued on Continuation Sheet #11

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet # 20

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12.08

UTM REFERENCES

D 1,9 | 3,5,7,0,6,0 | 4,7,7,0,6,0
A 1,9 | 3,5,7,3,8,0 | 4,7,7,0,6,7,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING
B 1,9 | 3,5,7,3,8,0 | 4,7,7,0,3,6,0
C 1,9 | 3,5,7,0,6,0 | 4,7,7,0,3,6,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Inclusive street address numbers for all streets bounding the district are: 358 - 456 Court Street on the north; 38 - 168 Marcy Street on the east; 3 - 7 Hancock Street on the south (plus two unnumbered buildings); 58 - 144 Washington Street on the west.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James L. Garvin, Research Curator

ORGANIZATION

Strawbery Banke, Inc.

DATE

June 10, 1974

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 300

TELEPHONE

603-436-8010

CITY OR TOWN

Portsmouth

STATE

New Hampshire 03801

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

James L. Garvin

TITLE

Commissioner, DRED
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 30, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert M. Gribble

DATE

6/30/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

W. M. ...

DATE

JUN 20 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Buildings number
1 - 34

Strawbery Banke, Inc.
P. O. Box 300
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Buildings number
A - E

Strawbery Banke, Inc.
P. O. Box 300
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Buildings number
I - III

Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial
c/o Hon. Bailey Aldrich
120 Brattle Street
Boston, Massachusetts, 02108

Buildings number
IV- V

Hon. Charles M. Dale
182 Post Road
North Hampton, NH 03862

Building number VI

Daniel J. Corcoran, Jr.
168 Marcy Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Building number VII

Jack Zeidman
3 Hancock Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Building number VIII

Rubert L. Reed
5 Hancock Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Building number IX

Columbus J. Marconi
7 Hancock Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Building numbers
X - XI

Clarence A. Atwell
45 Richmond Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

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Title of Survey: Historic American Buildings Survey (Joshua
Wentworth House)

Date of Survey: October, 1934 Federal State County Local

Depository for Survey Records:
Library of Congress
10 First Street, S.E.
Washington, D. C. 20540 Code: 11

Title of Survey: Historic American Buildings Survey
"Photo-Data Projects"
(Houses #2,3,5-8,11-13,15-21,23-25,27,29)

Date of Survey: July, 1962 Federal State County Local

Depository for Survey Records:
Library of Congress
10 First Street, S. E.
Washington, D. C. 20540 Code: 11

Title of Survey: New Hampshire's Historic Preservation Plan

Date of Survey: 1970 Federal State County Local

Depository for Survey Records:
Department of Resources and Economic Development
State House Annex
P. O. Box 856
25 Capitol Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301 Code: 33

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Title of Survey: Historic Sites Survey

Date of Survey: 1972 Federal State County Local

Depository for Survey Records:
Division of History
National Park Service

Street and Number:

City or Town: Washington State: D. C. Code: 11

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The houses of the Strawberry Banke historic district range in date from before 1700 to after 1900. In style, most of the houses are of Palladian/(Georgian) or post-Revolutionary (Federal) design. Most of the houses are two and a half stories high, with gable or hipped roofs. Scale is consistent throughout the area, with most facades measuring between 35 and 45 feet in width, and about 17 feet from sill to plate. Depth dimensions (from front to back) vary more widely, because some houses are one room deep and others are two rooms deep. Generally, the height/weight ratios of house facades in the district are about 1/2.35.

The exteriors of buildings within the area are generally embellished with architectural woodwork of good quality. This woodwork includes ornamental cornices, Palladian or Federal style doorways, beaded corner boards or simulated quoins, water tables, window caps of several styles, and window and/or door casings enriched with backband mouldings of various profiles. The interiors are similarly decorated with joiner's work of generally fine quality, including wainscoting, room cornices, mantelpieces of various styles, wall panelling, and a variety of stairway types.

The houses in the district are arbitrarily painted with a wide range of exterior colors, which are not based upon historical paint evidence except in the case of building number 26. The interiors of the restored houses are in most cases painted with colors that closely duplicate the original paints. Such houses are in some cases also treated with a variety of specialized early paint techniques, including glazing, graining, and marbleizing.

The quality of workmanship in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses of the district is generally high, and is coherent with that of other early Portsmouth buildings. Joiner's work, masonry, and house framing seem to be of consistent structural quality whether incorporated in a small and unpretentious dwelling or in a grand house. The quality of design, however, differs according to the pretensions of the structure. Generally, only the larger houses display highly elaborate or sophisticated architectural elements or painted treatments.

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2. General Physical Relationships of Buildings: The streets of the Strawberry Banke district intersect one another at right angles. They are among the narrowest in Portsmouth, in some cases measuring as little as eight feet in width. Washington and Jefferson Streets retain sidewalks of Durham flagstones, a type of sheared diorite that was quarried in Durham, N. H., brought eleven miles downstream by boat, and laid along one side of the principal streets of Portsmouth in the years just before 1800.³

Virtually all the early houses in the district were constructed with their facades or end elevations directly upon the edge of the streets. Houselots were generally small, sometimes little larger than the houses themselves.⁴ Gardens or yards were usually laid out behind the houses, and screened from the streets by the buildings. Thus, the streets are strongly delineated by a somewhat regular and linear arrangement of house facades. The combination of narrow street rights-of-way and closely-spaced buildings is characteristic of all surviving eighteenth century portions of Portsmouth. Historical records indicate that this type of street layout and urban planning was also typical of those sections of town that were burned in the great fires of the early nineteenth century.⁵

The density of housing in the Strawberry Banke district remains very high, with some houses separated from their neighbors by only a foot or two. There are a total of 39 dwellings on the 12.08 acres of the district, but the effective density of housing in the area is much higher than these statistics would indicate, because some 3.2 acres of the area is empty land that was once occupied by the Puddle Dock waterway, and the numerous streets of the area also occupy a considerable land surface.

³ Beck, Strawberry Banke Guidebook, p. xiii.

⁴ James L. Garvin, "Master Landscaping Plan, Strawberry Banke, Inc.," unpublished report with plot plan, 1974.

⁵ Charles W. Brewster, Rambles About Portsmouth, Second Series, (Portsmouth, N. H.: Lewis W. Brewster, 1869), Chapters 120 - 126.

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Plantings within the district generally date from the twentieth century. Original horticulture of the area may survive in the form of individual specimens of lilacs, roses, and lilies that have been propagated from old stock, but no recognizable remnants of early gardens have been found. The first attempt to recreate an early garden in the area occurred in 1908, when the Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial, along with the grounds that surround it, were restored to their appearance of about 1850.⁶ Beginning about 1964, several other gardens in the area were recreated under the direction of Strawberry Banke, Inc. Today, virtually all of the area under Strawberry Banke jurisdiction has been landscaped at least in part. Plant materials that were in use before 1820 have usually been reintroduced, though occasionally species that were imported in recent times or modern hybrids have been used. Trees in the area are mostly native species, with the boxelder (*Acer negundo*) predominating among the self-propagated specimens.⁷

The most significant natural feature of the Strawberry Banke district, and the focal point of the entire area, was a tidal waterway that extended into the center of the site until about 1899, when it was filled. At first called simply "the Creek," this inlet from the Piscataqua River came to be known by the whimsical name of "Puddle Dock" during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Virtually all of the north-south streets of the Strawberry Banke district terminated at public wharves on the shores of Puddle Dock, and many of the houses near the waterway were built with their facades facing the channel. Puddle Dock was commercially important as a point for transfer of cargoes from local wharves and warehouses to large vessels that moored in the main river and were served by small boats that could enter the shallow tidal waterway. During the nineteenth century, however, large wharves were built along the main river; Puddle Dock lost its commercial value and came to be regarded as a health hazard. It was filled by the city at the turn of the present

⁶ Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial Association, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial" (pamphlet).

⁷ Garvin, "Master Landscaping Plan," passim.

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century. Excavations carried out in 1966 and 1968 under the auspices of Strawberry Banke, Inc., have proven that this filled channel is one of the richest sites for historic archaeology in northern New England.⁸

3. Present and Original Uses of Buildings: Originally, almost all of the buildings that survive on their original sites at Strawberry Banke were used as dwelling houses. Four of the structures are believed to have been constructed as shops, or as shops combined with dwelling facilities. A number of the buildings -- perhaps half -- had shops built into their lower rooms at various times after their original construction, however. Evidence suggests that this practice was common in the other sections of Portsmouth that were burned in the great fires of the early nineteenth century, and that a combination of residential and commercial or craft activities in the same buildings was the norm in eighteenth century Portsmouth.

Presently, the majority of buildings in the area are open for public visitation during the summer, and are utilized either as restored museum houses or as craft or sales shops. Some are owned privately and are used as residences, and some are used as offices. Instances of permanent adaptive use include: buildings 16 and 17, originally workshops, now sales shops; building 6, originally a two-family dwelling, now a counseling center and temporary home for troubled young people; building 24, originally a stable, now a boat shop; building 28, originally a dwelling, now a research library. (See Sketch Map for details of present uses of buildings in the district.)

4. General Conditions of Buildings: Most of the buildings in the district are in good condition. All of the modern dwellings (IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X) are in excellent repair. Buildings II, 1, 6, 7, 9, 16, 17, 21, 24, 26, 28 and 30 have been either fully or partially restored to the period of the early nineteenth

⁸ Daniel W. Ingersoll, Jr., "Settlement Archaeology at Puddle Dock," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1971.

⁹ James L. Garvin, An Architectural and Historical Survey of the South End of Portsmouth, New Hampshire (Portsmouth, N. H.: Community Improvement Program, 1972), p. 6 Exterior.

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century, and are likewise in excellent condition. The majority of other buildings in the area have been at least partially renovated. In the course of restoration or adaptation, only a few major alterations have occurred to historic structures in the district. These include: new foundations under buildings 26, 28, 30, 31, and 32 (which were moved to their present sites), construction of a connecting wing between buildings 16 and 17, reconstruction of the west chimney of building 21, and installation of modern heating and plumbing systems in many of the buildings.

5. Intrusions: Due to demolition of most modern structures in the district by urban renewal, there are few intrusions into the early character of the neighborhood. Defining modern intrusions to the entire number of buildings is 15:50. A part of the district was set aside in the early 1960's to receive historic structures from elsewhere in Portsmouth. Five buildings of diverse types have been moved to this area, and represent several architectural styles not originally found within the district. While this portion of the Strawberry Banke historic district thus provides the opportunity to study several types of Portsmouth structures not ordinarily found in this section of the city, it does represent the intrusion of a twentieth century preservation philosophy into an otherwise little-altered area.

6. Qualities Which Make the District Distinct: The Strawberry Banke historic district is distinct from the area immediately adjoining it to the north. The northern area, as mentioned previously, was burned in the great fire of 1813. As rebuilt, it represents early nineteenth century concepts of "fireproof" brick residential and commercial architecture, street layout, and building design.¹⁰ The Strawberry Banke district, on the other hand, represents eighteenth century town planning and architec-

¹⁰ James L. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture," Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 2, (Summer, 1971), pp. 41 - 2.

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tural design, and retains a good cross-section of pre-1800 buildings ranging from unpretentious four-room houses to imposing eight- or ten-room double-chimney dwellings.

7. Verbal Boundary Description: The Strawberry Banke historic district is bounded on the north by Court Street, on the east by Marcy Street, on the south by the south property lines of the houses along the southside of Hancock Street, and on the west side of Washington Street (see Sketch Map). There are fifty individual structures within the district. Inclusive street address numbers for all streets bounding the district are: 358 - 456 Court Street; 38 - 168 Marcy Street; 3 - 7 Hancock Street (plus two unnumbered buildings); 58 - 144 Washington Street.

8. Original Appearance: For several years after its first settlement in 1630, this section of present-day Portsmouth contained only one important structure, the "Great House" or communal dwelling of the first settlers.¹¹ Eventually a few other buildings were erected in the district,¹² but the area generally remained in the hands of two or three landowners until about 1695. At that time, these men began to lay out small houselots and streets, and a number of individual dwellings were built by the new property owners.¹³ During the next century, land use in the district became more intensive, and by 1800 many of the larger lots set off about 1695 had been subdivided and were occupied by several houses.¹⁴ During the years 1800 - 1900, the appearance of the neighborhood did not change radically; most of the houses shown on J. G. Hales' Portsmouth map of 1813 can also be seen on maps of a century later.¹⁵ The first major change in the appearance of the district

¹¹ Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua," pp. 5, 33-4.

¹² "I. S.," "Pascatway River in New England," map of c. 1665, Collections of the British Museum (K. Top CXX-27).

¹³ Candee, "The John Sherburne House," pp. 4 - 11; Garvin, Architectural and Historical Survey, p. 5.

¹⁴ Garvin, "Master Landscaping Plan," see accompanying plot plan, "Historic Boundary Lines."

¹⁵ Ingersoll, "Settlement Archaeology at Puddle Dock," Vol. II, Plates 70 - 73.

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occurred in in the early years of the present century, when a number of tenement houses and junk dealers' sheds were built upon the newly-filled Puddle Dock area.¹⁶ The second radical change occurred in 1963, when most modern buildings were demolished in the Marcy-Washington Streets Urban Renewal Project (NH-R-1) and the area was brought essentially to its present-day appearance.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., Vol. I, Chapter 4.

¹⁷ "Boost for Strawberry Banke," Historic Preservation, XV, (1963). p. 28.

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merchants, or of mariners and craftsmen who were to become the progenitors of men of wealth and influence in the developing community of Portsmouth. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the houses of Hon. Henry Sherburne and of Lieutenant-Governor John Wentworth faced each other across the eastern end of the Creek, while at the western end stood the dwellings of Mark Langdon and George Peirce, both of whom were destined to have eminent offspring.

During the mid-eighteenth century, large and elegantly-finished houses were built in the area, carrying on a tradition of architectural quality already established by the Sherburne and Wentworth Houses. The Chase House (No. 21 -- 1762) and the Shapley House (c. 1760 -- now destroyed) both stood on Court Street and were both large gambrel-roofed dwellings having interiors enriched with sumptuous carving. This same tradition of elegance was carried on as late as 1800 -- the beginning of the decline of the Puddle Dock neighborhood -- in such dwellings as the Walsh House (No. 26) and the Hilton-Amazeen House (No. 14).

At the same time, however, many of the houses of the district were small and unpretentious. The homes of laborers, craftsmen and mariners, these dwellings survive as a type of architecture that is often unavailable for study elsewhere. Modest houses in the Strawberry Banke district range in date from the James Marden House (No. 8) of about 1700 to the Peacock House (No. 15) of about 1815.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Strawberry Banke district underwent a change in the character of its population. As the most prosperous families began to move elsewhere, particularly to the fashionable new neighborhoods along Middle and Islington Streets, immigrants began to occupy the houses near Puddle Dock. By the mid-nineteenth century, a number of Irish families lived in the district, and by 1900, landowners were predominantly Jewish.³

³ Nancy Beck, ed., The Strawberry Banke Guidebook, third revised edition (Portsmouth, NH: Strawberry Banke, Inc., 1971), p. xii.

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Shortly after 1900, one of the major occupations in the neighborhood became the merchandising of scrap metal.⁴ By the 1930s, most of the newly-filled land at Puddle Dock, as well as many of the old gardens of the area, had become junk yards. At this period, the Work Projects Administration proposed a program to rehabilitate the district. This suggestion led to an era of interest in the neighborhood as a surviving remnant of an eighteenth century community. This new interest culminated in the 1960s in a program of urban renewal in the district, one of the first such programs in the United States designed around a plan of historic preservation rather than demolition and redevelopment. Ultimately, the area was acquired for museum uses by Strawberry Banke, Inc. (see Section 5. "Preservation and/or Restoration Activities").

3. General Analysis of Architectural Styles or Periods: In general, the architectural styles seen in the Strawberry Banke district are comparable to those of the same periods in neighboring New England towns. The regional center from which local fashions generally emanated was Boston; influences from more distant urban centers are vague and difficult to trace. At the same time, however, Portsmouth itself possessed a strong local tradition in architecture and the decorative arts, and the force of this tradition invariably remoulded new fashions from Boston or elsewhere into a distinctive local expression. In the period after about 1750, architectural guidebooks also exerted an influence upon local builders, but the ideas conveyed by these books were likewise re-interpreted by Portsmouth artisans and emerged as distinctly localized expressions.

In the region's late seventeenth-century architecture, as exemplified by the 1695 portion of the Sherburne House (No. 1),

⁴ Daniel W. Ingersoll, Jr., "Settlement Archaeology at Puddle Dock," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1971, chapter 4.

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framing practices were not dissimilar to those utilized in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. The one distinctive regional preference in material, which persisted throughout the eighteenth century, was the use of eastern white pine (Pinus strobus) for the frame, rather than the various oak species (Quercus) preferred in southern New England.⁵

As the various architectural fashions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries appeared in America, they found expression in Portsmouth with various degrees of time-lag. As far as can be determined, the first expression of Palladian architecture in Portsmouth, on a very modest scale, was in the eastern portion (c. 1703) of the Sherburne House (No. 1). Here, a fully-developed classical cornice was employed in the first-floor parlor, apparently along with wall panelling.⁶ Later, these same motifs, greatly elaborated, would be used by the Boston joiner John Drew in the nearby MacPheadris-Warner House (1716).⁷

The early eighteenth-century appearance of Palladian architectural elements in Portsmouth represents a considerable time-lag behind Boston, where such features had been known considerably earlier. The same phenomenon occurred later in the century. It has been suggested, for example, that the floriated fireplace frieze in the Chase House (No. 21) may have been a post-Revolutionary addition. This would make it contemporary with the rich rococo-style carving in the nearby 1784 Langdon Mansion. If this is the case, both of these houses would exemplify an archaic use of an architectural style that had been current twenty years earlier in centers like Boston and, particularly, Philadelphia.⁸

The same stylistic delay is seen in the fully developed Federal style house, as typified by the 1811 Governor Goodwin Mansion

⁵ Beck, Strawbery Banke Guidebook, p. 32

⁶ Ibid., pp. 32-3.

⁷ Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua," pp. 15-16.

⁸ James L. Garvin, "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969, pp. 34-7.

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(No. 30). One of the first Portsmouth houses of this type was the John Peirce Mansion of 1799, although the architect Bulfinch had designed such houses in Boston a decade before this date. Local Federal Style architecture, as it finally matured after 1800, was highly derivative from Bulfinch's Boston work. The 1804 Portsmouth Athenaeum, designed by the local builder Bradbury Johnson, for example, was always mistakenly attributed to Bulfinch, as was the 1809 Portsmouth Academy building, designed by a Portsmouth joiner, James Nutter.⁹ On a more elementary scale, this same derivative and somewhat old-fashioned character can be seen in the smaller houses of the Strawberry Banke district.

4. Significant People or Events: During the mid-eighteenth century, the Strawberry Banke district was the focus for extensive political activity. The home of Royal Governor John Wentworth stood nearby at the foot of Washington Street, but Wentworth's presence did not subdue the activities of revolutionary elements in the Puddle Dock area. In 1766, citizens raised a Liberty Pole at the eastern bridge over Puddle Dock to protest the Stamp Act; a more recent flagpole on the same site still commemorates the event. Some months later, the bridge at this location (by then named "Liberty Bridge") was the site of another demonstration that led to the repudiation of the local Stamp Agent's commission. In memory of these events, the intersection of Horse Lane and Puddle Lane (now Liberty Street and Charles Street), within the Strawberry Banke district, bore the patriotic name of "Liberty Square" until well into the nineteenth century.

The Earl of Halifax Tavern (No. 18) on present-day Court Street was a second focus of political activity of an opposite nature. Here, across the street from the home of the government official Theodore Atkinson, the Loyalists of Portsmouth frequently convened and enjoyed the hospitality of British-born innholder John Stavers. As revolutionary feeling grew more intense, the

⁹ James L. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture," Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 2, (Summer, 1971), pp.22-24.

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Portsmouth Sons of Liberty eventually attacked and vandalized the Halifax Tavern, resulting in Stavers' decision to change its name to honor the pro-Colonial British statesman William Pitt.

The Pitt Tavern's "long room" on the third floor provided the setting for the first dramatic and operatic performances ever presented in New Hampshire, in 1769 and the years that followed. Here, too, the local Freemasons had their lodgeroom, and in this chamber the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire was founded on July 8, 1789. Many distinguished guests were entertained at the Pitt Tavern, including John Hancock, Elbridge Gerry, Edward Rutledge, William Whipple, and Matthew Thornton, all signers of the Declaration of Independence; Major General Henry Knox; the Marquis de Lafayette; John Paul Jones; Louis Philippe, later King of France; and President George Washington.¹⁰

Most of the buildings moved to Strawberry Banke's "Area to Receive Historic Buildings from Without" also have associations with well-known persons. In this area is the only remaining Portsmouth home of the statesman Daniel Webster (No. 28), as well as that of the merchant and Revolutionary patriot Joshua Wentworth (No. 32). Here, too, is the 1761 Stoodley's Tavern (No. 31), probably the most elegant eighteenth century Portsmouth inn, and for many years the social center of the seaport. In this area stands the home of Ichabod Goodwin (No. 30), New Hampshire's governor at the beginning of the Civil War. This structure was moved to this site by the State of New Hampshire in 1963 to prevent its destruction, and was restored with State funds in 1965. Also moved to this area by State funding is the building believed to be the only remaining portion of New Hampshire's 1758 State House (No. 27).

5. Preservation and/or Restoration Activities: In 1935, consultants for the Work Projects Administration proposed that the

¹⁰ Beck, Strawberry Banke, Guidebook, p. 6

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early houses of the district be restored, and that the tenement buildings that had sprung up in the area be removed to another part of town.¹¹ This proposed program was seen as offering the secondary benefit of providing employment for between 500 and 1,000 men who were on relief during the Depression.¹² The idea was first proposed by Stephen Decatur of Kittery Point, Maine, antiquarian, and John Mead Howells of New York City, Charleston, South Carolina, and Kittery Point, architect. Mr. Donald Corley, Architectural Research Advisor of the Architectural Research Section of the Work Projects Administration, served as a consultant. Apparently due to the easing of the Depression and to the need to prepare for the Second World War, this program never developed beyond initial planning stages.

During the mid-1950s, the Portsmouth Housing Authority (the local urban renewal agency) planned to demolish all the buildings in the Puddle Dock area in order to construct garden-type apartments there. This idea was opposed by a group of local citizens led by Dorothy M. Vaughan, Portsmouth librarian and antiquarian, who proposed instead a development similar to the one that had been suggested twenty years earlier by the W.P.A. Housing Authority officials eventually favored this idea, and the two groups joined forces and won tentative Federal approval in June, 1958. Encouraged by the advice and assistance of Dr. Richard H. Howland, then President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the citizens' group incorporated itself as Strawberry Banke, Inc., on November 12, 1958.¹³ In the preamble of its charter of incorporation, Strawberry Banke announced its goal "to acquire, receive, hold, care for, invest in, operate, administer

¹¹ Work Projects Administration, "Tentative Program of Proposed Restoration of Portsmouth, New Hampshire," typewritten study /c. 1935/.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Boost for Strawberry Banke," *Historic Preservation*, XV, 1 (1963), p. 28.

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and otherwise deal in such real and personal property as may illustrate and be a part of the early history of Portsmouth, the Piscataqua River, and the State of New Hampshire." In March, 1959, state zoning legislation was passed to permit any New Hampshire city to preserve and restore old buildings in a renewal area, and final Federal approval of the project (now known as the Marcy-Washington Streets Urban Renewal Project) came on July 23, 1960.¹⁴ The Portsmouth Housing Authority received \$800,000 of state and municipal funds to acquire the properties generally within the boundaries shown on the sketch map, and by 1964 site clearance had been completed. Strawberry Banke, Inc., acquired title to the area in September, 1964.

By 1963, Strawberry Banke, Inc., had named an official architect. Mr. William Graves Perry, senior partner in the firm of Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean, was retained to guide the restoration of Strawberry Banke. Perry, who had been one of the first architects employed at Williamsburg in the 1920s, provided an over-all concept for the division of Strawberry Banke into two areas: 1. the "Historic Area," where all structures to be preserved or replaced were to have historic precedent to justify them; 2. the "Area to Receive Historic Buildings from Without," to which Portsmouth structures of architectural or historical importance would be moved if necessary for their preservation.¹⁵ Perry and members of his firm supplied restoration plans for the Chase House (No. 21), the Governor Goodwin Mansion (No. 30), the Dunaway Store (No. 33), the Shapley House (No. 17), and the Gookin House (No. 16). Perry also developed the concept of the "State House Group," to be dominated by the reconstructed 1758 New Hampshire State House and to form the focal point of the "Area to Receive Historic Structures from Without."¹⁶

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Beck, Strawberry Banke Guidebook, pp. 58-9.

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In 1966, Strawberry Banke, Inc., employed Philip W. Baker of Antrim, New Hampshire to restore the Capt. John Clark House (No. 7) and the Capt. John Sherburne House (No. 1). Architectural consultation for the former was provided by William G. Perry, and for the latter by Abbott Lowell Cummings, then Assistant Director for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

By 1970, the growth of Strawberry Banke's professional staff led to a policy of planning and supervising the restoration of historic buildings under the direction of staff members. Accordingly, the Capt. Keyran Walsh House (No. 26), restored 1970-72, the Daniel Webster House (No. 28), restored 1972-73, and the Dinsmore Blacksmith Shop (No. 9), reconstructed 1970, were all completed under the supervision of James L. Garvin, then Curator of Strawberry Banke.

Under a policy of adaptive use enunciated by Edmund E. Lynch, Director of Strawberry Banke from 1971 to 1974, the Shapley Town House (No. 6) was remodelled in 1973 into a temporary home and counseling center for troubled young people. Other buildings have been adapted for such uses as an office, a coffee shop, an education center, and for several craft shops.

6. Architectural Significance: See above, Section 2, Origins and Historical Development of the District, and Section 3, General Analysis of Architectural Styles.

Commerce: Many of the sales and craft shops of eighteenth-century Portsmouth were located in this area, and the district produced or processed many of the goods that left the seaport during this period. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the wharves of Puddle Dock were commercially important, and even when they were superseded, it was by longer wharves built into the main river directly adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Strawberry Banke district. While the Puddle Dock area was not the major commercial section of Portsmouth at any time after the early 1700s, it nevertheless retained an important commercial admixture among its many buildings even as late as the 1960s.

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Literature: The Strawberry Banke district was the setting for the children's classic, The Story of a Bad Boy, by the nineteenth century author, editor and poet Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836 - 1907). Aldrich's boyhood home, depicted in the book, stands in the area and has been restored and opened to the public since 1908; it was one of the first houses in America so preserved. Aldrich's other writings, especially his An Old Town By the Sea, strongly emphasize nineteenth century Portsmouth,¹⁷ and have been recognized as key expressions of "local color" in American literature.

Urban Planning: The Strawberry Banke area is significant as one of the first districts in the nation where urban renewal was adapted toward historic preservation instead of demolition and reconstruction (see Section 5, Preservation and Restoration Activities) The district also exemplifies various twentieth-century preservation philosophies, including the "historical village" concept, the creation of an artificial enclave of historic buildings moved from elsewhere, and adaptive use.¹⁸ The Strawberry Banke district is presently one of two local historic districts in Portsmouth.

¹⁷ Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial Association, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich Memorial" (pamphlet).

¹⁸ William B. Hart, Jr., "Preservation History of New Hampshire," typewritten study [1974], pp. 16-18.

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