

104

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Town Watertown. 017

Address 562 Main Street

Historic Name Abraham Browne House

Use: Present Museum/residence

Original Residence

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1694-1701

Source Deeds, visual analysis

Style First Period

Architect Unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric Clapboards

Outbuildings 2 barns - ca. 1800 (Derby Barn), and late 19th c.

Major Alterations (with dates) North addition after 1727; lean-to, 19th c.

Condition Excellent; altered

Moved barn only Date 1925

Acreage less than one acre

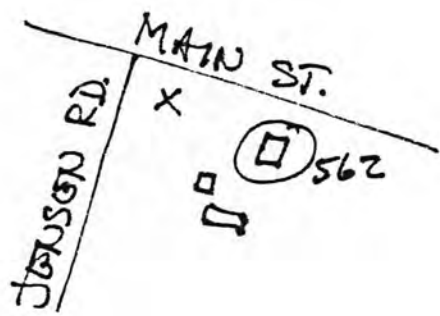
Setting Residential, backing up to Browne School on busy main street among closely spaced houses of first half of 20th century.

Recorded by Richard Candee

Organization Boston University

Date June 1986

- 65:2 facadd
- 65:6 18th c. addition from rear
- 65:21 transverse summer 1st floor
- 65: 18 first floor chimney
- 65:10 chamber chimney wall
- 65: 5 Derby Barn
- 65:8 transverse summer



REFERENCE 19 / 318-780 / 4693-230

QUADRANGLE Newton (now Boston South)

SCALE 1:25,000

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: WATERTOWN	Form No: 104
Property Name: Abraham Browne House	

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

SIGNIFICANCE

The Browne House possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It is an outstanding example of the single-cell original plan, with unique construction and decorative features associated with First Period architecture in eastern Massachusetts, meeting Criterion C. The three-part casement opening in the rear wall is the only known Massachusetts example found in situ (and became the model for many later restorations besides its own). The late use of tusk tenon floor joist joints is an unusual conservative trait of structural carpentry. The high survival of molded horizontal sheathing on the first floor, wrought decorative hardware, painted decoration on the original plaster wall, and applied decorative trim to fireplace and ceiling of the second floor make it one of the most complete First Period houses in the county. Its roofing system of principal rafters is one of a small group that form the heart of a Middlesex county regional pattern that continues into the later eighteenth century.

The Browne house also meets Criterion D for its potential to reveal further information about First Period framing and finish methods. Much information was already revealed during investigations that took place during the Appleton restorations of 1919-20.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The original c.1694-1701 core, a two story single cell house with a pilastered end chimney in the original west bay, faces south, and has a 19th century lean-to along the west wall and a third of its north wall. Its own chimney is located in the NW corner. Abutting the remainder of the north wall is a large post-1727 two-story central chimney addition which has its primary facade on the east and runs at right angles to the original First Period house. The southern facade of the original house has a restored First Period entrance door into the far western end of the chimney bay with a single restored casement window above, a large restored three-part casement window on both stories, and a small single casement light near the east end above the bulkhead entrance to the cellar. (Another major addition, built before 1727 to the present south wall, was removed in the restoration of 1919-20.) It is thought that the house may originally have had a rear leanto that was removed in the eighteenth century changes. [1]

MAJOR FIRST PERIOD FEATURES

The house has a transverse 1st floor summer beam and 2nd floor transverse tie, both decorated with bevel chamfers and taper stops. It is unusual for a late 17th century ceiling to use joists with tusk-tenons, a feature largely supplanted by butt-cog floor joists after 1660. The interior walls of the first floor have horizontal sheathing with a molded edge and a large original fireplace (restored by Appleton in 1919-20). [2]

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The second floor room is unique for retaining a three-part window casement frame with its molded mullion all in place in the north wall, where it was blocked after 1727 by the addition. In this room, as well as on the first floor, the original plaster is laid directly over the brick nogging and studs with no laths. The room was also decorated with black painted "baseboards" during the First Period. [3] The wall above the chamber fireplace is set back and allows an original mantel shelf of applied moldings. The door from the stairhall to this second floor chamber has original First Period C-curve and strap decorative hinges. [4] The tie beam is transverse; the floor joists meet the girts and have coverboard at right angles at the junction with joists, forming "a rudimentary boxed cornice" [5]

The roof is composed of principal rafters without purlins. The large fireplace in the hall, the chamber fireplace and pilastered chimney stack are original, although carefully restored in 1919-20.

SIGNIFICANT LATER FEATURES

The 1727 addition with its pedimented east facade doorway and central chimney plan is characteristic of Second Period construction, and of unusually early date for Watertown. The Derby Barn is an important building type of which few examples survive, and is associated with the master builder-architect, Samuel McIntire.

SETTING

Along Main Street (Route 1) combining commercial, public, and residential uses; near the Waltham town line. The house is set back from the street 60 feet in the center of the house lot. Two barns are located to the south, one the c. 1800 Derby Barn attributed to Samuel McIntire and relocated from the Elias Hasket Derby estate in 1925.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Capt. Abraham Browne acquired the property by 1694, and Selectmen's records show that the house was standing by 1701. It came into the possession of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1919, and in 1919-20 the society's founder, William Sumner Appleton, investigated and restored the building with the assistance of Joseph Everett Chandler and Norman Isham, two early leading architects of restoration and specialists in First Period architecture. Under Appleton's hand the building yielded unique information about First Period construction methods, materials, and finish. The restoration has been cited as an outstanding example of early twentieth century restoration philosophy. [6]

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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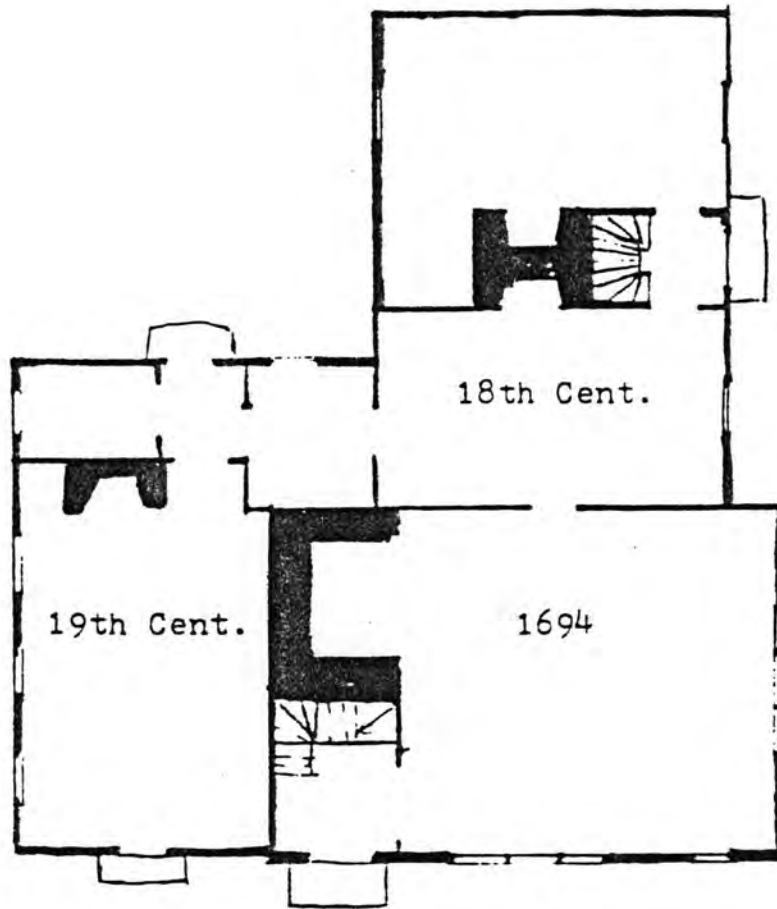
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For further information, see references listed below, and SPNEA files.

REFERENCES

1. Abbott L. Cummings, Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, (Cambridge, Harvard Press, 1979), p. 187.
2. Cummings Framed Houses, pp. 170.
3. Cummings Framed Houses, pp. 145, 152, 172, 196.
4. Cummings Framed Houses, p. 182, 185.
5. Cummings, Framed Houses, p. 172, photo 175.
6. Abbott L. Cummings, ed. Architecture in Colonial Massachusetts vol. 51, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, (Charlottesville, Va.: Univ. of Va. Press, 1979), pp. 188-9; Charles Hosmer, Jr., The Presence of the Past (NY: Putnam, 1965), pp. 246-50.



BROWNE HOUSE 1694, 18th and 19th Cents.
562 Main St.
Watertown, Mass.
(not drawn to scale,
partitions approximated)



1/24/90

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts TR
State _____

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 81. White--Preston House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 82. Whittemore House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 83. Woodberry--Quarrels House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 84. Woodbury, Peter, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 85. Bacon, Stephen, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 86. Bickford, John, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 87. Brewer, Moses, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 88. Brown--Stow House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 89. Browne, Abraham, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____
- 90. Buck, Ephraim, House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Melrose Byers 3/9/90
Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Browne, Abraham, House

MULTIPLE NAME: First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts TR

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 1/24/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/07/90
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/10/90
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90000186

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/9/90 DATE Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTMs boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Watertown, MA

65:6

562 Main St.

Abraham Boone House

1st Period Buildings of R. May, TR

1955



65:2

Abraham Browne House
562 Main St
Watertown, MA

1st Period Buildings of E. Mass, TR

1985



65:5

562 Main St.
Watertown, MA

Abraham Brown e House

1st Period Buildings of E. Ma., TR

1985



Watertown, MA

65-18

562 Main St.

Abraham Brown, House

1st Pond Buildings of E. May, TR

1985



Watertown, MA
562 Main St.
Abraham Brome House

65:10

1st Period Buildings of B. May, TR

1985



Abraham Brown House
562 Main Street, Watertown, MA

65-21-

4th Period Buildings of E. Ma., TR

transverse summer beam
into front girt
summer decorated with
flat chamfer with lamb's tongue
stops

reconstructed casements based
on original found in chamber
rear wall. 1985



Watertown, MA

562 Main St.

Amos Bronn House

1st Period Buildings of E. Mass., PA

1985

8:57

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000281