

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Shirley-Eustis House

AND/OR COMMON

Shirley-Eustis House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

31-37 Shirley Street

___NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Roxbury

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Massachusetts

___ VICINITY OF
CODE

25

COUNTY

Suffolk

CODE

025

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**

___DISTRICT

 BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC

___PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

___OCCUPIED

 UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE YES, RESTRICTED

___YES, UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

 OTHER unused**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Massachusetts Historical Commission under the administration of
Shirley-Eustis House Association

STREET & NUMBER

40 Beacon Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Suffolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Somerset Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey (14 sheets; 1 data page; 29 photos)

DATE

1930's 1964; 1939-1963

 FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress / Annex Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house, constructed from 1741 to 1756 for Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts became somewhat of a colonial showplace with its imposing facades and elaborate interior designs. The site also added to the impact of this great mansion. To the south and east the field sloped away to the salt marshes, beyond which lay the harbor with its various islands, while the southern boundary of the estate was formed by the picturesque brook that had separated the towns of Roxbury and Dorchester from the beginning of the settlement. To the west lay the ancient highway which ran from Dorchester Village through Roxbury to Boston. Originally standing four hundred and twenty-five feet southeast of the road, it was approached by a drive leading to the west facade. The two-and-one-half story house was framed in solid oak raised on a high stone basement which formed a full first level. Kitchens and offices were contained on one side with slaves' quarters on the other side of the passage.

A great double flight of stone steps led up to the main or west entrance. Here the facade was broken into five bays by the application of giant pilasters, one on either side of the entrance and two pairs on either side of those. The windows had no elaborate framing but the entrance was surrounded with rusticated quoins and a prominent oversized keystone. The garden or east facade had four giant pilasters, one at each corner, and one on either side of the huge Palladian window which formed the central feature of the facade. The window had fluted Doric pilasters and a full Doric frieze with a shell motif in the lunette area above the central section. A dentiled cornice surrounded the entire building. Two pedimented dormers protruded from the hipped roof on the north and south ends. Except for the now demolished Foster-Hutchinson House, built in Boston around 1688, this was the first use of giant pilasters in New England.

The walls covered with clapboards in 1819, were originally faced by boards grooved to simulate rusticated masonry, perhaps the first use of this device in the colonies. The walls also had nearly a foot of air space between the outer wall of brick-filled framing timbers and an inner wall of studs and plaster. The steep-pitch hipped roof was surmounted by a balustraded deck with an ornate and huge cupola and a pair of interior chimneys.

The original plan suggests an unrivaled magnificence for large social gatherings. One enters a hall extending across the west front of the house, with paneled walls, two large windows, and a floor paved with dark blue and white marble blocks. At the north end of the hall was the main stair and the double doors to the salon which were on the main axis at the east side of this hall. The hall has stairs at one side to the chamber above. During Shirley's day these stairs provided the only way to reach the second floor. The very large salon, located to the east of the hall, served for receptions and state banquets. It was two stories high, with a coved ceiling and a musicians gallery over the entrance. The wood work and plaster of the walls were painted a pale greenish-gray and the floor painted--tradition says "like a carpet"--with enriched borders and central ornament. In the middle of the east wall of the salon was the great Palladian window, its central arch a story-and-a-half high. Inside its piers and jambs were faced by Corinthian pilasters.

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1741

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Shirley-Eustis House was originally the home of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts from 1741 to 1756, and a foremost colonial leader in the generation preceding the Revolution. After being used by American patriots during the Revolution as a barracks and hospital during the military siege of Boston, it was purchased by Dr. William Eustis in 1819 and altered. Eustis had been a surgeon in the Revolutionary War and was twice elected Governor of Massachusetts.

In addition to its historical associations the building was once one of the most imposing houses of formal Georgian design in the Colonies. A four-square frame structure topped by a cupola, the Shirley-Eustis House was among the first to use the giant order pilasters applied for added grandeur. The house, once used as a tenement, is now unoccupied and is in an advanced state of deterioration.

HISTORY

William Shirley came to Boston in 1731 where he began the practice of law. Political and military affairs absorbed Shirley's interest while intriquing with Samuel Waldo to remove Governor Belcher from his office. In May, 1741 he met with success and was appointed by the authorities in England to succeed Belcher. Shirley concerned himself with efforts toward Continental unity and the destruction of the French power in North America. After leading the successful attack against Louisburg in 1745, he was sent to Paris by the British Government to negotiate the boundaries between New England and Canada. Later during the French and Indian War, after Braddock's death, Shirley was appointed commander-in-chief of the English forces in America. After political maneuvering by New York politicians, he was dismissed from this post and later as governor of Massachusetts.

That same year, 1759, he returned to England and although his conduct was vindicated, he was poorly rewarded for his various efforts by being made governor of the Bahama Islands. Governor Shirley purchased his estate from Samuel Waldo in 1746 while he was in the middle of his military and political activities against the French. He had determined by this time to make his home permanently in Massachusetts and had secured the Roxbury estate for the purpose of building himself a large comfortable country residence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Kimball, Fiske, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic, New York, 1922.
- Morison, Elizabeth C., "Shirley-Eustis House", National Park Service Report, undated, Historic Sites Survey property files.
- Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .25
 UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 19 | 329230 | 4687550 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Shirley-Eustis House is surrounded by a chain link fence approximately 100 feet to a side. Since it is enclosed by buildings on three sides and Shirley Street on the north, the fence forms the landmark boundary enclosing a small garden area around the house.

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 Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project
original form prepared by Charles Snell, 1967

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| ORGANIZATION | DATE |
| <u>Historic Sites Survey</u> | |
| STREET & NUMBER | TELEPHONE |
| <u>1100 L Street</u> | <u>523-5464</u> |
| CITY OR TOWN | STATE |
| <u>Washington</u> | <u>D.C.</u> |

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

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 3/4/79

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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Shirley-Eustis
House

7

1

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

From this window one looked out over a pyramidal flight of steps, across the formal garden with its maze, and down a hillside to the distant water of Old Harbor. Smaller family rooms, four in number, were located at each corner of the house on the first floor. The hugh salon had no fireplace and even though the walls were insulated, the house must have been impractical for winter residence.

The house was confiscated during the Revolution and used by the patriots as a barracks and a hospital during the siege of Boston. Thereafter the property passed through several hands until it was purchased in 1819 by Dr. William Eustis. He made a number of alterations in the building, adding a broad staircase in the salon and eliminating the musicians gallery.

The house was sold by the Eustis family in 1867 and moved 30 feet to the east to its present site in order to lay out Shirley Street. Before rescue by the Shirley-Eustis House Association in 1911, it had been cut up into tenements and its original rural setting wholly destroyed by streets and unsightly buildings crowing upon it. In recent years the house has been kept in a state of temporary repair pending definite plans for restoration. The interior is not furnished, and the entire building is rapidly deteriorating. Most of the changes made to the house after 1867 have been removed including a balcony extending around to the door of a guest chamber and piazzas or verandas at either end of the house which lasted only during the lifetime of Madam Eustis. Until the piazzas were added there were two small corner building diagonally opposite each other at the ends of the house.

The structure is not in a condition to be shown to the general public but is protected by a resident caretaker who occupies quarters in the basement story.

There is still some original cornice moldings, window frames and shutters, but on the whole the woodwork is not very elaborate or notable. A new zinc coated copper roof has made the building weather tight, but the interior remains in a deteriorated state. The exterior has been painted yellow-beige with green shutters.

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Shirley-Eustis
CONTINUATION SHEET House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 (History)

Shortly after Shirley was appointed governor of the Bahamas, and being uncertain whether he would ever return to Massachusetts, he conveyed his estate for about five hundred pounds by an indenture to his son-in-law Eliakim Hutchinson. Hutchinson died in 1775 but his property was confiscated during the Revolution because of his loyalist associations prior to his death. It was used by soldiers as a barracks during the siege of Boston, suffering its first decline.

It was restored by John Read who purchased the property in 1782 in the sale of confiscated estates. After the nine years of Read's residence the house had a succession of owners until 1819 when it was purchased by William Eustis of Boston.

Governor Eustis was born at Cambridge in 1753, and graduated from Harvard in 1772. Adhering to the popular party, Mr. Eustis entered the Revolutionary Army and served as a surgeon throughout the war. At the close of the Revolution he returned to Boston and began practicing as a surgeon. He also engaged actively in politics, was a member of the Massachusetts legislature from 1773-1794, and a member of the Governor's Council under Governor Sullivan. He was a member of Congress from 1801-1805, being elected as one of the democratic or Jeffersonian party and in 1807 he was made Secretary of War and retained that office until 1813.

In the following year he was appointed Minister of Holland and resided continuously at the Hague until 1818, when he returned to his native town and immediately bought Shirley Place, establishing it as his residence. He was a member of Congress from 1820-1823 and from 1823 until his death, in 1825, was governor of Massachusetts.

Upon his death, intestate, in 1825, the homestead was set off to his widow. In the probate papers it is described as a mansion house, stable, and other buildings in Roxbury and Dorchester adjoining Dorchester Brook, valued at \$10,000.

Madame Eustis continued to reside in his place until her death thirty-one years later in 1867. Governor Eustis died childless and the reversion of his property descended to the numerous descendants of his various brothers and sisters.

On the 15th of June, 1867, a partition of the governor's large holdings in Roxbury, Cambridge, and elsewhere was made among the heirs and at this time the land was platted into small lots.

About this time two new streets were cut through the premises, one parallel to and east of Dudley Street, or Eustis Street, as it was then called, which was named George Street, and the two streets were connected by a new street called Shirley Street, which ran directly across the site to the old house. At this time the house was moved about 20 feet southeast of its original location to make way for the street.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

House

ITEM NUMBER

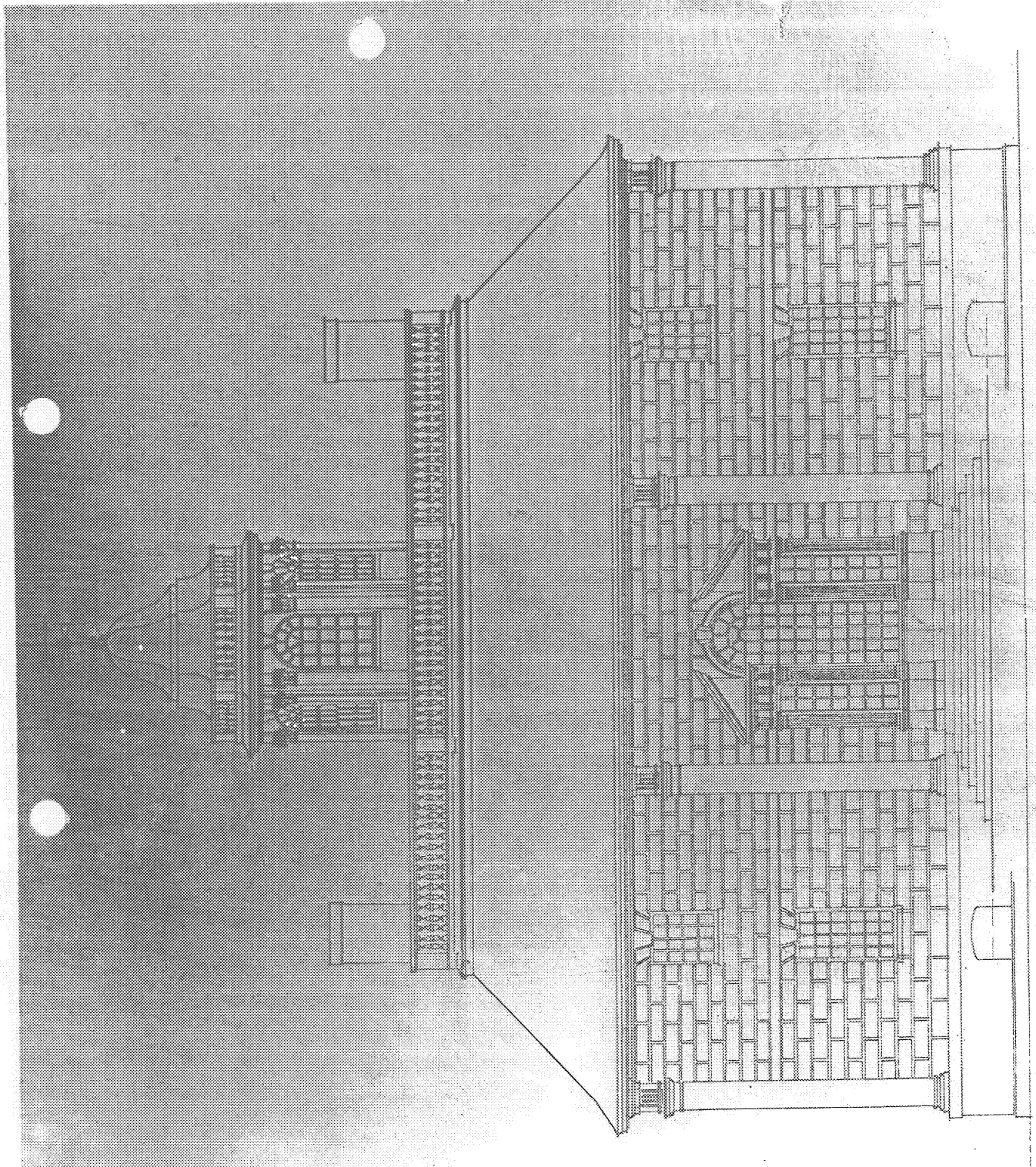
8

PAGE

2

History

In the division of the estates the lot with the house fell to Allain Eustis of New Orleans. He sold the property in 1867 to W. Elliot Woodward and Freeman D. Osgood. They heavily mortgaged the property to Elizabeth Farnsworth and divided the house into apartments. When the mortgage was foreclosed for default the house was conveyed to Hannah F. Osgood in 1883. Her heirs sold the house to the Shirley-Eustis House Association, organized to save the house from destruction. Although a HUD grant of \$250,000 was spent on the house it still stands in an advanced state of deterioration.



The East Facade as Originally Completed

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

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Shirley-Eustis House

AND/OR COMMON

Shirley-Eustis House

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Roxbury

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Suffolk

STATE

Mass

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

SPNEA

DATE OF PHOTO

Undated

NEGATIVE FILED AT

SPNEA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

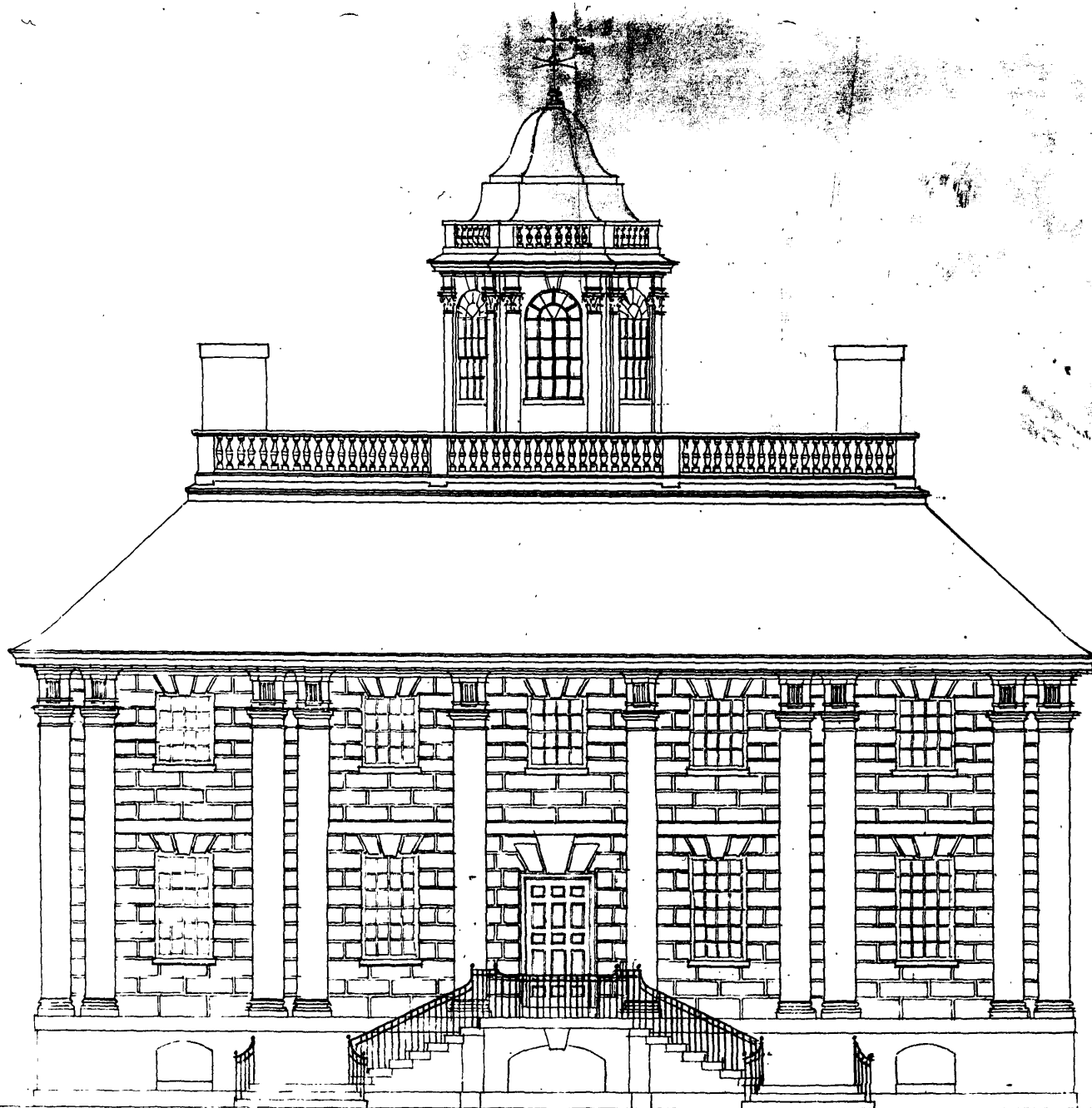
PHOTO NO.

A reduction of the measured drawings of the Shirley-Eustis House, made by W.W. Cordingley

INT: 2983-75

*by W.W. Cordingley
owned by the S. A. N. E. A.*

PHOTOGRAPHIC DEPT.
NEGATIVE No. 2850-18



The West facade as Originally Completed.

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

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Roxbury

___VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Suffolk

STATE

Mass

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT SPNEA

DATE OF PHOTO Undated

NEGATIVE FILED AT

SPNEA

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A reduction of the measured drawing of the Shirley-Eustis House, made by W.W. Cordingley

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*Made by W. W. Cordingley
and owned by S. P. N. E. A.*

141 CAMBRIDGE ST. BOSTON, MASS

PHOTOGRAPHIC DEPT.

NEGATIVE NO. 2651-13