

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

MOSES PIERCE -HICHBORN HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

Moses Pierce- Hichborn House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

29 North Square

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Boston

— VICINITY OF
CODE

Eighth

STATE

COUNTY

CODE

Massachusetts

025

Suffolk

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 MUSEUM
 COMMERCIAL PARK
 EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS
 GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC
 INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION
 MILITARY OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Paul Revere Memorial Association

STREET & NUMBER

19 North Square

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Boston

— VICINITY OF

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Suffolk Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Suffolk County courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Boston

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1941

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Moses Pierce-Hichborn House stands on the western side of North Square (numbered at 29) in Boston, Massachusetts. The small lot on which it was constructed is now part of a larger, irregularly shaped parcel containing the Pierce-Hichborn House to the south, the Paul Revere House (also a national historic landmark) to the northeast, and landscaped grounds between and to the rear (west) of the buildings. The Paul Revere Memorial Association has owned both houses since 1970 and operates them as a unit.

Constructed c. 1711 of brick laid in English bond, the three-story Pierce-Hichborn House is one of the few pre-Georgian town houses surviving in New England. The house is believed to be the second oldest building extant in Boston and carries the earliest hipped roof yet recorded in that city, perhaps one of the earliest in the English colonies. Another feature indicating the age of the house is the diagonal summer or dragon beam, a survival of medieval framing techniques, used in the attic floor and third floor ceiling.

The oblong-shaped six-room house was built with its east two-bay end facing North Square. The main five-bay facade faces south, opening on a small yard. The north elevation is blank, except for one small window at the third floor level, and contains two large chimneys which are joined together by a parapet. Floor levels in the second and third stories on the east and south elevations are marked by decorative brick belt courses and the first and second story windows on these same elevations have fine elliptical brick arches over them. The foreshortened third-story windows are rectangular and set against the cornice. The two-story service wing was added to the western end of the building c. 1805-1820.

The Pierce-Hichborn House is entered by means of a heavy double door with an elliptical brick arch over it that is located in the center of the south facade. Each floor has a central stairhall, with one room situated on either side. Every room has its own large paneled fireplace and the interior walls are plastered. The original kitchen was located to the right of the hall (on the street side) on the first floor, and the living room to the left. The upper rooms were originally all bedrooms, but the front (east) room on the second floor was later remodeled into a parlor. The service wing initially contained a later kitchen and chamber, now converted for use as a caretaker's apartment.

The Pierce-Hichborn House was allowed to deteriorate during the second half of the 19th century and eventually became a tenement and store. In 1950-51 the Moses Pierce-Williams House Association (see significance) carried out an extensive restoration under the supervision of Charles R. Strickland, a specialist in Colonial architecture. Though it was necessary to replace some 85% of the material in the building, its historic character was carefully maintained. The Pierce-Hichborn House is now in excellent condition and operates as an historic house museum. Its furnishings, which include loan items from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, are of fine quality, though some date from a period earlier than that of the house.

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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input 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 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 c.1711; 1950-51 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Moses Pierce, Builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Charles Strickland, restoration

The Moses Pierce-Hichborn House, a three-story brick building erected at 29 North Square, Boston, about 1711, is one of the few pre-Georgian town houses surviving in New England. It is believed to be the second oldest building extant in Boston and has the earliest hipped roof yet recorded in that city, perhaps one of the earliest in the English colonies. The two-story service wing at the western end of the house dates from c. 1805-1820.

During the second half of the 19th century, the Pierce-Hichborn House was allowed to deteriorate and eventually became a tenement and store. The extensive restoration carried out in 1950-51 involved the replacement of some 85% of the material in the building. The property is now in excellent condition and is open to the public as an historic house museum. It is owned by the Paul Revere Memorial Association and operated jointly with the Paul Revere House, located immediately to the north at 19 North Square.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Pierce-Hichborn House is typical of many pre-Georgian houses that were erected to replace earlier wooden buildings destroyed by the nine serious fires that occurred in Boston from 1676 to 1711. Moses Pierce, an artisan-glazier, acquired title to the lot from his mother--a daughter of the John Jeffs who built the Paul Revere House immediately to the north--in 1710 and probably constructed the three-story house the following year. Pierce retained the house until 1747, when it was purchased by William Shippard, a "gentleman". The next owner, who bought the house in 1781, was Nathaniel Hichborn, a shipwright and cousin of Paul Revere.

After the house passed out of the hands of the Hichborn family in 1864, it gradually deteriorated and eventually became a tenement and store. In 1941 two officials of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities purchased the building at a bank auction. Eight years later the house was turned over to the newly-organized Pierce-Williams House Association (misnamed through a clerical error in the incorporation documents). In 1950-51 that Association carried out an extensive restoration of the house under the direction of Charles R. Strickland, a specialist in Colonial architecture. Since 1970 the Pierce-Hichborn House has been owned by the Paul Revere Memorial Association and operated with the Paul Revere House as one unit.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Final Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission to the Congress of the United States" (Boston, June, 1960).
 Pratt, Richard and Dorothy. A Guide to Early American Homes-North (New York, 1956).
 Paul Revere Memorial Fellowship research material produced by ongoing interdisciplinary study, in possession of Paul Revere Memorial Association.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	3 3 0 8 2 0	4 6 9 1 9 4 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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 Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian, 1/16/68

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

12/5/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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

N/A National Historic Landmark

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

5/12/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

The boundaries of the national historic landmark designated for the Moses Pierce-Hichborn House, Boston, Massachusetts, include both that building, located at 29 North Square, and the adjacent Paul Revere House, at 19 North Square. The latter building is a national historic landmark in its own right, and, like the Pierce-Hichborn House, is owned by the Paul Revere Memorial Association. Specific boundary lines, including the two landmark buildings on 6,841 square feet of land, are shown in red on the accompanying sketch map, a photocopy of a plan prepared for the "Final Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission to the Congress of the United States", dated June, 1960.