

NR Already on NR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 19 1973
DATE ENTERED	Approved 4/4/80

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Adams National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

Old House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

135 Adams Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Quincy

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

25

COUNTY

Norfolk

CODE

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

VICINITY OF

STATE

MA

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

650 High Street

CITY, TOWN

Dedham

STATE

MA

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

H.A.B.S.

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Adams National Historic Site is located on 8.45 acres of land in Quincy, Massachusetts. It includes both the Adams site and, since 1972, the Beale estate (3.68 acres) to the west. The site is roughly rectangular and is bounded on the south by Adams Street, on the east by Newport Avenue, and on the north by Furnace Brook Parkway and the back (northern) lot line of the Beale estate. The west boundary is also the Beale lot line. The Adams site is separated from the adjoining Beale estate by a line of mature trees along the original mutual boundary.

Of the many structures that stood on the Adams estate during their 139 years residency, five remain today. The Old House, the home of four generations of Adamses, is the oldest building and the focal point of the property. It fronts closely on Adams Street at the approximate midpoint of the Adams Street, or southern, boundary line. The stone library is located just to the northwest of the Old House at the edge of a formal garden, while the Carriage House and Woodshed lie on a slight rise along the eastern boundary. The Greenhouse is close to the northern boundary line not far from the northeast corner of the site where Furnace Brook Parkway and Newport Avenue intersect. In the approximate center of the original Beale property is the Beale House, to the northeast of which is the Beale Carriage House.

The setting of the Adams site, once entirely rural, has changed considerably to a suburban, almost urban, one. The immediate vicinity to the site is moderately dense residential. The farm of John Adams' day has assumed the aspect of a country estate with the extensive lawns, gardens and large trees on the grounds serving as a buffer between the Old House and the bounding streets. In addition, the site is enclosed on the street sides by a solid wall of Quincy granite with stone capping which is the successor to the fences which earlier enclosed the property. A section of this wall in front of the Adams house is brick with two attractive wooden gates leading to the front doors of the house.

Narrow lawned areas run behind the wall along Adams Street in front of the Old House and the formal 18th century garden which sweeps from the house almost to the original Beale property line. This garden originally consisted of three rectangular beds edged with box imported from England and set off by gravel paths. There is now a fourth bed beside the Library. The garden contained many different kinds of fruit trees when Abigail and John Adams bought the property in 1787, but growing there now are the species of flowers planted in the mid-19th century by the wife of Charles Francis Adams. An orchard lies north of the formal garden and the Old House, and extends back toward the northern boundary. It originated with trees planted soon after the house was built in 1731. Northeast of the orchard, the Greenhouse, built by Charles Francis Adams, now occupies part of the field where John Adams once planted his potatoes. Also in this field is the Duck Pond that John Adams originated. It lies in a slight depression in the northeast corner of the property between the Greenhouse and the Carriage House.

Mature shade and fruit trees dot the lawns which sweep from the orchard and the Old House to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Many ornamental shrubs and vines provide, for the Old House and the Library, a graceful setting within the total environment of the grounds.

The Beale Estate remains even more heavily wooded than the Adams property.

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DATE ENTERED	4/7/80

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PAGE two

1. Old House (No. HS 1)

The Adams House--known in the family as the Old House--was built at different periods. The original house comprises the front western section of the present residence. Of Georgian design, it was erected in 1731. It is a two-story-plus-attic frame structure of post-and-beam construction, sheathed with clapboards and placed on a low foundation of local stone set in mortar. A cellar has existed beneath it since 1791 or earlier. The house was symmetrical, seven bays across the front facade with a central doorway. The windows, 6/6 double-hung sash, included four half closet windows, one each on the first and second floor at each end. Only one remains today on the second floor at the west end. The central doorway was ornamented with an arched pediment which was probably removed when John Adams added the covered portico in 1800. This arched form was repeated in the center dormer on the roof which also has been changed to conform to the more pointed shape of the others. Three dormer windows pierced the roof to light the attic. The house had a gambrel roof and brick end chimney walls, one of which was subsequently incorporated into the Adamses' east wing addition. The original gambrel roof can still be seen on the west side of the present house. The original wood shingles were replaced by slate in 1870. The original structure contains only four main rooms and an attic with a central stair hall on the first and second floors. One of the rooms is richly paneled from floor to ceiling in Santo Domingo mahogany. The kitchen and servants' quarters were initially in a separate building in the rear.

Today the original section forms the core of a much larger structure. At some time prior to the Adams' purchase of the house in 1789, a three story kitchen ell with a cellar was added to the north side, or rear, of the house. The first addition the Adamses made to the house was a large, two-and-one-half story, L-shaped wing of frame at the east end. This was erected in 1800 while John Adams was president of the United States. It nearly doubled the size of the house, providing a second, and larger, entrance, a second staircase, and a large reception room, the "Long Room" with bedrooms above. On the exterior, the east wing conforms in style to the Georgian of the original section, as does the kitchen ell.

Extensive renovations in the kitchen were undertaken by John Quincy Adams in 1829, and in 1836 he built the two-story north passage which connects the kitchen ell with the east wing without walking through all the other rooms in the house. This, too, is a frame post-and-beam structure, clapboarded, and set on a stone foundation. Like the original section and the east wing addition, it has a gambrel roof covered by slate shingles which replaced the original wooden ones in 1870.

Charles Francis Adams effected substantial changes in the Old House. In addition to remodeling the various rooms, he added an east portico off the Long Room and replaced the south portico with one slightly more elaborate. After 1868, he extensively remodeled the kitchen wing and built a new three-story addition behind it for servants' quarters.

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This addition, like those before it, conforms to the style of the original 1731 house. In 1870, when he had a new slate roof put on the whole house for fire protection, the 18th century railing on the roof of the original portion was removed.

Brooks Adams, the last of his family to live in Quincy, made only one structural change in the Old House, although he did paint and paper many of the rooms. He removed the east portico which his father had built because it darkened the Long Room.

2. Library (No. HS 2)

Built in 1870 by Charles Francis Adams to house the Adams library, the one-room Library is of granite and brick construction with no basement. It is one story high with a slated gable roof. The interior walls are lined to ceiling height with oak book shelves with a gallery at the second floor level. The floor is tiled in a pattern of brown, buff, and blue. There are no windows except for a skylight. Instead, the south, west, and north walls are pierced by French doors. Like the Carriage House, the Library has a Victorian eclectic character. It contains some 14,000 volumes and is still in use for research and reference purposes.

3. Carriage House (No. HS 3)

The Boston architectural firm of Commings and Sears was commissioned in 1872 to design a new carriage house for Charles Frances Adams. The large, two-story structure was completed in 1873, replacing the early cluster of barns, stables and carriage house located to the east of the Old House and in the path of the new Newport Avenue. It is a U-shaped building of native granite and fieldstone with decorative brick banding and traces of English, Gothic and Norman detailing in the Victorian eclectic style. The barge boards on the wide, overhanging eaves are decorated with Gothic quatrefoils. The half-timbered gables are English and the square tower in the court is of Norman derivation. In keeping with the style of the Carriage House, its roof is of colored slates in a decorative pattern.

The south wing of the Carriage House was the coachman's living quarters. This space now contains National Park Service offices. The central portion of the first floor was a huge carriage room with carriage-washing facilities. The north wing housed the livestock. On the first floor are six horse stalls and a tack room, while in the basement below are pens for cattle and goats. From the basement, two large doors open out at ground level on the north side where for many years there was a corral next to the building. The interior of the Carriage House is, for the most part, either plastered or sheathed in wood in various degrees of finish according to use. The floors also are of wood.

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4. The Flower Garden (No. HS 4)

On the west side of the Old House lies the 18th century garden which has always been a prominent feature of the property. It consists of three boxwood-lined formal parterres bound together by three parallel alleys which join three shorter alleys to form a rectangular geometrical pattern in the style of the English formal garden. The walks, with one exception, are lined with a border of colorful perennial and annual flowers, but the main field of each panel is of clipped grass. The planting follows that done by Mrs. Charles Francis Adams in the mid-19th century. In contrast, the garden contained many species of fruit trees when John and Abigail Adams lived in the Old House. It most probably was established in about 1731 when the house was built and was carefully tended by the Adamses until 1927.

5. Greenhouse (No. HS5)

The present Greenhouse was probably built by Brooks Adams and occupies the site of an earlier greenhouse. The structure is one story and consists of glazed operable sections fitted into either side of a gabled wood frame which rests on concrete foundations.

6. Duck Pond (No. HS 6)

Excavation for the pond was first made by John Adams about 1821 in a depressed area of the meadow or "lower garden" north of the Old House. In Brooks Adams' time, ducks were still kept on the pond during summer and fall.

7. Woodshed (Woodhouse) (No. HS 7)

The Woodshed was built by John Adams in 1799 or 1800. It is a wood-frame structure with a cedar shingled roof and a dirt floor. The front is sheathed with vertical flush boarding while the sides and back are clapboarded. The three doorways are trimmed with blind arches. This building was moved from its original location near the Old House to its present site in 1873. It is set on a partial stone foundation to compensate for the slope of the lawn at this point.

8. Beale House (No. HS 8)

Built in 1792 on the property to the west of the Old House, this is a fine Federal-style building. A frame structure, it has clapboard siding and a modern asphalt shingled roof. The facade is typically symmetrical with five bays and a center door. The house consists of a basement, two floors and an attic. There are four rooms, kitchen, powder room and screened porch on the first floor; six bedrooms and three baths on the second floor. The house was built by Captain Benjamin Beale, neighbor and friend of the Adams family. In 1792, John Adams referred to it as the largest and handsomest ever built in their neighborhood. The exterior appearance of this property has not changed substantially since the late 18th century.

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9. Beale Carriage House (No. HS 9)

The construction date of this building is uncertain. It is a frame structure with asphalt-shingled roof, wood shingles on the rear walls and clapboard siding on the others. In general character and composition, it conforms to the main house. The Carriage House now contains a living room with a gallery-type room overlooking it, bedroom, bath, utility and kitchen.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Adams National Historic Site in Quincy, Massachusetts, is significant as the home of four generations of the Adams family (1788-1927) who, over a period of 139 years, played a leading role in the development of the American nation. Distinguished in public service and in literary pursuits, the men of each generation left their stamp on the history of the United States and on this site which was their permanent home.

The most important physical resources associated with the significance of the Adams site are: (No. HS 1) the Old House and its furnishing, modified by generations of Adamses; (No. HS 2), the stone Library which contains the impressive and still used collection of the family's books; (No. HS 3) a stone and brick Carriage House; (No. HS 5) a Greenhouse; and (No. HS 7) a Woodshed. There are, as well, extensive grounds which were carefully tended by each generation. The adjacent Beale property, now also owned by the NPS, is important in that it maintains the environment familiar to the Adamses. The physical appearance of the Beale property has not changed since the days of John Adams. In addition, the Federal style Beale house is itself of architectural importance.

The Old House (No. HS1) is the principal building within the Adams National Historic Site. Its significance rests primarily in its long association with the Adams family and in the fact that it remains now as it was when they departed in 1927. The house is also of interest architecturally, enlarged to its present configuration by successive generations of the family to accommodate their needs.

Other (Significance):

Every room in the Old House and all its furnishings are intimately associated with one or more members of this remarkable family as are the grounds and the other structures on the site around it. Much of the china, pottery, glassware, paintings and some pieces of furniture reflect the diplomatic background of John, John Quincy and Charles Francis Adams who each returned with prized possessions from their various European missions. Of the greatest significance is the fact that the building itself and all its furnishings display intact the continuity of the Adamses life there with each generation contributing something of itself. Not representative of any one period, the Old House instead clearly shows the changing style and taste of its famous occupants from 1788 to 1927.

The Adams' association with the site in Quincy began in 1787 when John Adams bought it while still envoy to the Court of St. James. In 1788, on their return to the United States, he and his family moved into the small house on the property. One of its rooms is richly panelled in Santo Domingo mahogany, among the earliest such paneling found in New England. First named "Peacefield" by John Adams, the house soon became known to the family as the "Old House," due largely to the fact that it had been built as a country villa in 1731.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, L. H. Butterfield, Editor, The Adams Papers, vol. I-IV, Harvard University Press, 1961; a series of Historic Structure Reports, available in the park and the regional office.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8.45

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	3340,8,0	468,074,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

*See site plan*

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Anne Booth, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

North Atlantic Region, NPS

DATE

6/16/77

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

TELEPHONE

223-3778

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

MA

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

TITLE

*Actg. Asst. Dir. Cultural Resources*

DATE

*1/10/79*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*4/9/80*

DATE

*4/3/80*



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John Adams intended to settle down in Quincy to a life of farming after years of political and literary service to the emerging American nation. Among the many appointments which he had filled was that as Delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress (1774-1777). A decade of foreign missions had followed, which included posts in France, Holland and Great Britain, during which he gained recognition for the new nation from Holland and signed the Treaty of 1783 giving the United States independence. Further public duties, however, prevented him from becoming a farmer, except occasionally, during the next twelve years. Yet, as Vice-President under Washington (1788-1796), and then as President (1796-1800), he returned as often as possible to the Old House until, in 1801, he retired there. In his absence, his wife, Abigail, oversaw additions to the house which doubled its capacity while she also managed the farm. Of special care to her was the garden on the west side of the house. Laid out in 1731, in the style of an English formal garden, it contained an abundance of fruit trees when John Adams bought the property. This garden remained a source of pride to all four generations of the Adams family, and, although they altered its contents throughout the years, they maintained the original design laid out by the builder. The significance of this garden thus lies in the fact that it, like the orchard to the north, remains an integral part of the environment familiar to all the occupants of the Old House.

John Quincy Adams, Minister to the Netherlands, Prussia, Russia and the Court of St. James; Secretary of State, Sixth President of the United States; and for 17 years representative from his district to the United States House of Representatives, used the Old House for his summer home. Like his father, he came home from his duties in Washington and elsewhere to restore his spirits and draw strength from the familiar surroundings of the Old House. Further additions and alterations were made to the house in his time.

Charles Francis Adams gradually converted John Adams' working farm into a Victorian country gentleman's seat during the course of his own public career as a Member of Congress (1859-1861), Minister to the Court of St. James (1861-1868), and member of the Geneva Arbitration Tribunal to settle the Alabama claims (1871-1872). In 1870, he erected the Stone Library (No. HS 2) on the grounds just northwest of the Old House and on the edge of the formal garden. Designed with the help of the Boston architect Edward Cabot, the building was intended to be fireproof. Here Charles Francis re-edited the letters of his grandmother, Abigail Adams; edited the 10-volume Works of John Adams and the 12-volume Memoirs of John Quincy Adams. Two men of the fourth generation also worked extensively in the Stone Library. Henry Adams wrote a large part of his 9-volume History of the United States 1800-1817 there while Brooks Adams wrote all or part of his six books which contributed greatly to the development of political trends and to the future position of America in the arts and sciences.

The large stone and brick Carriage House (No. HS 3) was built by Charles Francis Adams in 1873 to replace buildings he had to remove when Newport Avenue was carved out along his eastern boundary. The imposing U-shaped structure was designed by the

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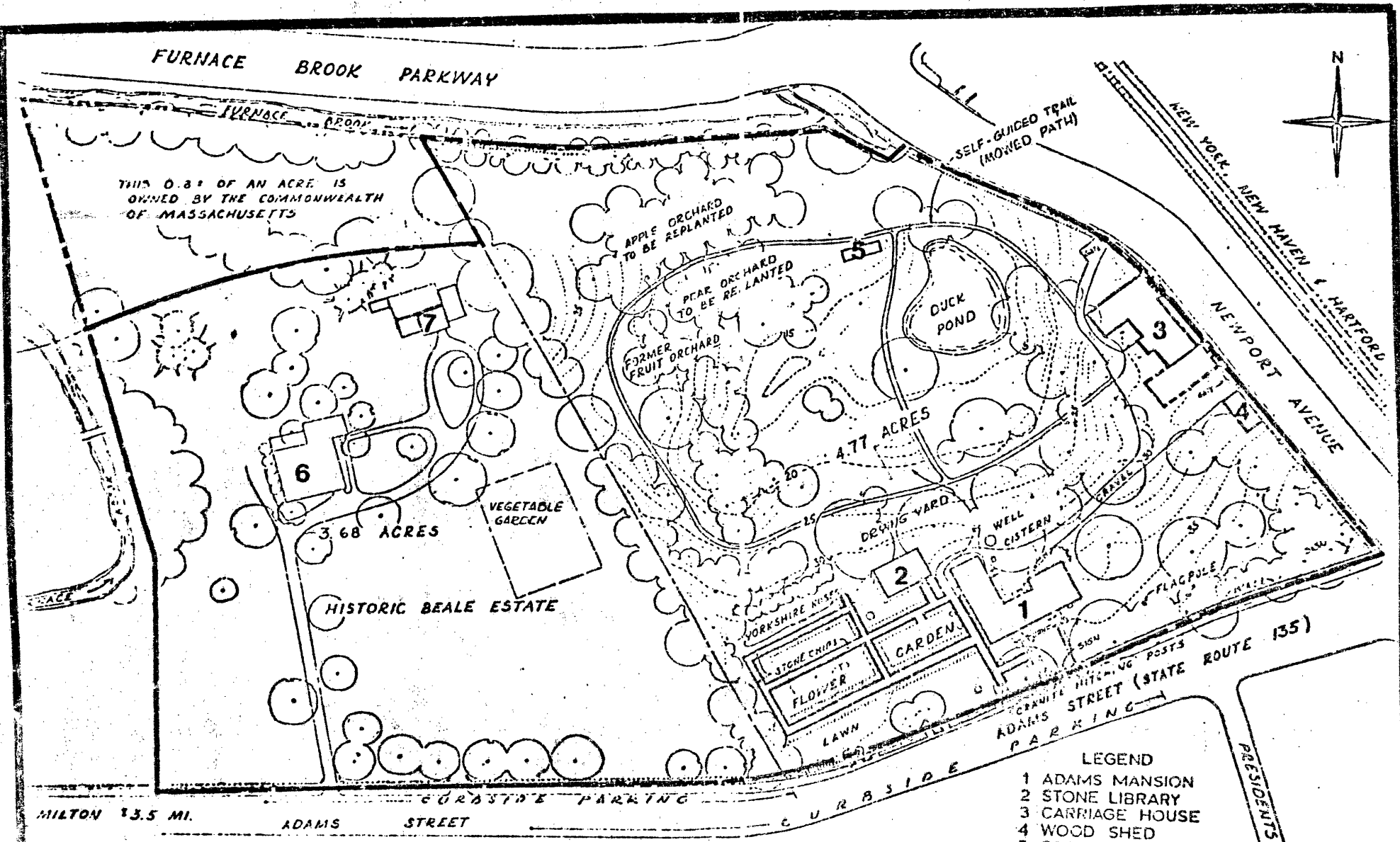
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Boston architects Cummins and Sears to house the stable, the coachman's quarters, and the carriage room.

The original Greenhouse (No. HS 6) was erected about 1873 by Charles Francis Adams to provide flowers for the formal garden from which his wife had recently removed the fruit trees of Abigail Adams' time. The Greenhouse may have been considerably altered or even replaced by Brooks Adams, although its location appears to be the same.

The Woodshed (No. HS 7) presently standing on the east boundary of the Adams National Historic Site, was built by John Adams in 1799 or 1800 as close as possible to the northeast of the Old House. It is significant in that it is the one farm building that survived Charles Francis Adams' reorganization of the farm in the 1870's. In 1873, the Woodshed had to be moved from its original location, however, because it stood in the path of the gravel drive laid out from the new Carriage House up to the back of the Old House.



THIS 0.81 OF AN ACRE IS OWNED BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

APPLE ORCHARD TO BE REPLANTED  
PEAR ORCHARD TO BE REPLANTED  
FORMER FRUIT ORCHARD

4.77 ACRES

3.68 ACRES

HISTORIC BEALE ESTATE

VEGETABLE GARDEN

DRIVING YARD

WELL CISTERN

YORKSHIRE HOUSE

STONE CHIMNEY

FLOWER GARDEN

LAWN

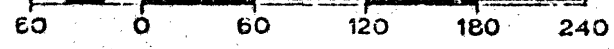
FLAGPOLE

ADAMS STREET (STATE ROUTE 135)  
CURBSIDE PARKING

MILTON 3.5 MI.

ADAMS STREET

SCALE IN FEET



# ADAMS NHS

- LEGEND
- 1 ADAMS MANSION
  - 2 STONE LIBRARY
  - 3 CARRIAGE HOUSE
  - 4 WOOD SHED
  - 5 GREENHOUSE
  - 6 BEALE HOUSE
  - 7 CARRIAGE HOUSE

arrived N.R. 3/31/80