

FORM B - BUILDING

Area	Form no.
A	14

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

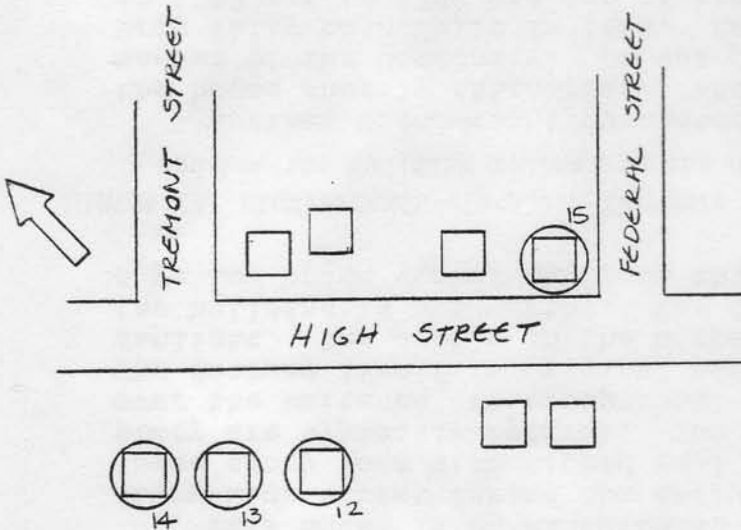


Newburyport
77 High Street
 Historic Name Wheelwright-Richardson Hse
 Original Residence
 Present _____
 Ownership: Private individual
 Private organization Idal
 Convalescent Centers Inc.
 Public _____
 Original owner Abraham Wheelwright

location in relation to nearest
cross streets and other buildings
or geographical features.
Indicate north.

DESCRIPTION:

Date c. 1806
 Source Hale, "Old Newburyport Houses"
 Style Federal
 Architect Unknown
 Exterior wall fabric Brick
 Outbuildings Shed



Major alterations (with dates) yellow
brick veneer on facade of building
(date unknown)
 Moved _____ Date _____
 Approx. acreage 1.10 acres.
 Setting on Newburyport's main
thoroughfare noted for its excellent
examples of domestic architecture
dating from the Colonial period through
the early 20th century.

Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt
 Organization Office of Community
 Development
 Date 8-4-80

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

This house is an exceptional example of the Federal style as built along High Street during the early years of the 19th century. Its three story form with hipped roof and small square windows in the third story are typically Federal. The splayed lintels and Palladian window over the entrance are exceptional as is the portico with balustrade. The doorway itself is original and is surmounted by an elliptical fanlight. The cupola in the hipped roof with cornice matching that of the building is noteworthy. The facade of the building was covered with a yellow brick veneer early in this century.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Abraham Wheelwright purchased this parcel of land in 1806 and built the house shortly thereafter. Wheelwright was a merchant and a prominent member of the community. He was part owner of the Ship "Pilgrim" and the Brig Sally both built in 1804. He served as a selectman in Newburyport in 1797 and in 1798 was one of the organizers of the First Social Library Society and the Newburyport Library. Wheelwright was one of those that paid for the Ship "Merrimack" which was fitted out in Newburyport and given to the United States government.

In 1851 the house was owned by Capt. John Wills, a merchant. His wife lived in the house until the 1870's. Wills was also a prominent member of the community. He was elected president of the American Seaman's Friend Society and was a director of the Merchant's Insurance Company and the Merchant's National Bank, both incorporated in 1831.

The house was owned by Alice M. A. Richardson between 1908 and 1958. In 1960 the building was converted to a nursing home.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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J. M. Howells, The Architectural Heritage of the Merrimack, N. Y. 1941.
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Assessor's Records 1890-1980
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1872 Map of the City of Newburyport, Mass. D.G. Beers and Co. 20M-2/80
1851, 1871 City Directories