

FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 8/2/84

Assessor's number
17-11

USGS Quad
Newburyport

Area(s)
L,W

Form Number
399

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building



Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 65 Water Street

Historic Name Gwynne-Davenport Mercantile Building

Uses: Present Commercial

Original Commercial

Date of Construction late 18th century

Source visual inspection

Style/Form

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

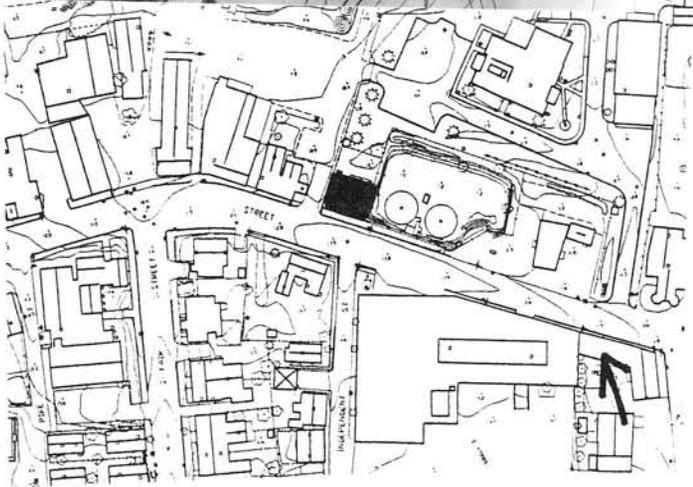
Major Alterations (with dates) c.1970 - renovations for
use as art gallery

Condition good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 3130 SF

Setting mixed use area along waterfront, east of
Market Square



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) June 1999

BUILDING FORM (65 Water Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The building at 65 Water Street is a rare example of a late 18th century mercantile building which has seen many changes to its fenestration in recent years. The 2 1/2-story, side-gabled building is constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond. The building is capped by an asphalt-shingled gable roof with a tall brick chimney rising from the front slope. It displays eaves which are flush with the ends. Along the facade, a cornice consisting of five courses of brick projects slightly.

The first floor facade is divided into two symmetrical halves with a doorway on each side flanked by two windows. The northern doorway is no longer operational but displays a simple frame and retains its granite stoop. The other doorway contains a modern six-panel door. The size of the original opening has been blocked down by the placement of a recessed panel adjacent to the door. Windows on the first floor contain modern replacement 8/8 sash and are fronted by window boxes. The second story is punctuated by four slightly smaller windows and a lower loft door capped by a beam for hoists. The door opening now contains a wooden board painted in trompe l'oeil fashion. The second floor openings are not aligned with those on the first floor and contain 1/1 sash.

The south gable end has two 6/6 replacement wood windows in the attic while the single opening on the first floor has been covered with boards. The north end also has two attic windows with two windows, a 1/1 and a 2/2, on the first floor. Above the windows is a painted advertisement for Yexas Groceries, the c.1950 tenant. On the rear elevation there is a single door on the ground floor, a modern insertion with a concrete stoop. An additional upstairs entry is fronted by a wooden fire escape. Several openings on the rear elevation have been bricked in, including two arched openings with brick lintels.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This brick mercantile building dates to the late 18th century although whether it was built by Captain Anthony Gwynne or Anthony Davenport is not known. The land on which the building stands was consolidated by Captain Anthony Gwynne in 1756. Captain Gwynne, a merchant, owned the land until his death in 1777 and may have built the brick building. When the property was conveyed to Anthony Davenport in 1785, the deed specifically conveyed "all buildings, stores and wharf". Whether this includes the present brick building remains unknown.

Anthony Davenport was the son of William Davenport, the proprietor of the Wolfe Tavern. In the late 18th century Anthony Davenport was a prominent, wealthy merchant who owned the wharf behind this building as well as neighboring buildings. A 1791 map of Merrimack Street included in Currier's History of Newburyport labels this as a bake house.

By 1851 the building and the wharf had been acquired by Robert Bayley and Sons, importers of molasses from Puerto Rico and the West Indies. Bayley acquired half of the brick store in 1845 in a Sheriff's Sale, after Solomon Currier defaulted on his mortgage to Ebenezer Moseley. The other half Bayley purchased from Anthony Davenport in 1852. (The 1851 map lists the property as being owned by Bayley & Davenport.) It is estimated that during its fifty-year career Bayley and Sons paid the government, through the Newburyport Custom House, more than \$3,000,000 in duties, largely on sugar and molasses imported from the West Indies. Receipts at the port reached a maximum in 1875 and 1876 when more than \$100,000 was collected each year, largely on materials imported by Bayley and Sons. The firm of Bayley and Sons dissolved in 1877.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
NewburyportProperty Address
65 Water Street
Area(s) Form No.Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

L,W	399
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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

Soon thereafter the building was occupied as a machine shop by Henry T. Moody who made velocipedes among other things. He went on to establish the Victor Manufacturing Company, makers of fire doors, tin-clad fire shutters and heavy hardware. The brick building was acquired by Victor Manufacturing in 1886 and by 1894 a series of wood-frame buildings had been constructed behind the brick building. Victor Manufacturing remained here until the late 1930s. The wooden machine shop and storage buildings were removed between 1924 and 1946.

The property was owned by members of the Cashman family until 1961 and during this period the building housed Yerxa's Grocery Store and the Idle hour Pool Room. The building was purchased by the Newburyport Art Association in 1969. The Art Association began renovations to the building in 1970, according to plans by Harry Swanson. An article appearing in the local newspaper in 1970 suggested that the first floor may have been used as a counting house while the second floor was a sail loft. The Newburyport Art Association was formed in 1948 and was located at 1 Threadneedle Alley from 1948 until 1961.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Currier, John J. *History of Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1764-1906*, vols. 1 & 2. Newburyport: 1906 & 1909.
 Erickson, Candace Chapman. "Dooryard and Shipyard: Four Walking Tours of Newburyport".
 Essex County, Register of Deeds.
 Irving, Ron. Unpublished research on Water Street.
 Massachusetts Historical Commission. Historic Resources Inventory: Newburyport.
 Newburyport City Directories, various dates.
 Newburyport Daily News, 3/6/1970; 3/14/1970.
 Stirgwort, Mary Jane. "Historical Buildings Survey and Inventory, Newburyport, Massachusetts: Narrative History",
 Prepared for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1980.
 Wardwell, Anne. "National Register Nomination for the U.S. Custom House", 1970.

Maps

- Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia: D.B. Beers & Co., 1872.
Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts. Boston: George H. Walker, 1884.
 Beck & Paul. *City of Newburyport*. Framingham, Mass.: Bigelow and Hazen, 1880.
Plan of Newburyport. Philadelphia: H. McIntyre, 1851.
 Sanborn Insurance Maps. Massachusetts State Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
NewburyportProperty Address
85 Water Street
Area(s) Form No.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

L,W	400
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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Currier, John J. *History of Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1764-1906*, vols. 1 & 2. Newburyport: 1906 & 1909.
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