

**NEWTON PUBLIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHASE II – ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Building Analysis

Jackson Homestead



Address: 527 Washington Street

Year of Construction: 1809

Level of Significance: High

Individually listed building on the National Register of Historic Places, 1973.

Recommended Treatment Level: Preservation

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance

Building History

The Jackson Homestead, or Timothy Jackson House, is a well-preserved building in the Federal Style originally constructed in 1809 as a private residence. The building is located on an approximately 1-acre site off Washington Street in Newton Corner and has many typical features of its style and region, including a strictly symmetrical front façade with 6-over-6 wood window sashes and paired chimneys, a low hipped roof, and an elliptical fanlight set within an elaborate door surround. Like many Federal buildings in New England the building has clapboard siding at the primary façade with end walls constructed of brick. The rear elevation is clad with wood shingles.

Edward Jackson (1602-1681), one of the first settlers and largest landowners in what is now Newton, acquired the land that would later be the Homestead's site. In 1670 he built a house at the location of the present building for his son, Sebas, who moved into the house after his marriage in 1671. The original structure was a south-facing saltbox house 22 feet long and 18 feet wide. Either Sebas or his son Joseph later added an additional 17 feet to one end of the structure. In 1780 the house was inherited by Sebas's great-grandson Timothy Jackson (1756-1814). In 1809 Timothy Jackson decided to replace the saltbox house with a two-family dwelling in a more contemporary style. Many of the structural components of the original saltbox building were reused in the new house's adjoining service ell.

The Homestead was lived in by Jackson descendents until 1932. One of the most prominent of these residents was William Jackson (1783-1885), Timothy's son, who moved to the Homestead in 1820. William altered the house from a two-family to single-family dwelling. He also established a soap and candle factory on the property. William was very involved in Newton civic life and was elected a member of the US Congress in 1832. He also was associated with the Abolitionists, and the Homestead became a stop on the Underground Railroad. In recognition of this role the building was listed on the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom in 2001.

William Jackson's wife and unmarried daughters lived in the house after his death until the early 1900s. During this period the house remained relatively unchanged with the exception of the demolition of the soap factory structures on the site. In 1906 the house was completely renovated for another member of the Jackson family. The building systems were upgraded and the building's structure reinforced. This is likely also the time period in which the existing concrete porch and door were added to the rear elevation. In 1932 the house was rented to a dentist who made further alterations to accommodate his dental practice.

In 1949 Mrs. Harry S. Middendorf, a Jackson descendant, deeded the house to the City of Newton. The terms of the deed called for the Homestead to be used for educational purposes and in 1950 the building became the City Museum and the headquarters of the Newton Historical Society. Changes were made to the building to support its new role including conversion of the service ell into an office and archive space and transformation of the traditional residential spaces into exhibit spaces and offices. Few changes were made to the exterior with the exception of an emergency exit leading from the basement inserted into the building's rear wall in 1998.

Level of Significance

The Jackson Homestead was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 under Criteria A for its association with the development of Newton and with the Jackson family, and under Criteria C, as a well-preserved Federal Style dwelling that retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling and association.

References

Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Form B NWT.167—527 Washington Street" (2001).
Fleishman, Thelma. *The Jacksons and their Homestead in Newton, Massachusetts*. Newton, MA: Roberts Printing Company, 1984.

PART I – Additional Resources and Historic Images

Additional Information Sources for Future Research

The archives of Historic Newton, housed within the Jackson Homestead has an extensive collection of photographs, slides and manuscripts of Jackson family history including the history of the Homestead itself.

Historic Images



Figure 1: The Jackson Homestead in 1935 (Credit: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, Arthur C. Haskell, Photographer).



Figure 2: Interior stair-hall in the Jackson Homestead, 1935 (Credit: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, Arthur C. Haskell, Photographer).

PART 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features

Significant Exterior Features

Setting

- Open corner lot with decorative fencing at the street edge. The fencing is a reproduction constructed in 2001 from historical documentation.

Shape

- Two story rectangular structure with five bays at the street and rear elevation and four bays at the side elevation. A four-bay, one-story service ell with a shed roof is appended to the northeast corner of the building.

Roof and Related Features

- Moderately pitched hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles (replacing the original wood shingles) at the main building.
- Wooden gutters located at all roof eaves. The gutters have copper leaders.
- Paired masonry chimneys at each brick end wall.
- Shed roof at the service ell clad with asphalt shingles. The roof of the service ell is hidden from view at the front façade.

Openings

- Regular pattern of wood windows with 6-over-6 double hung sashes. The sashes are each covered with a wood exterior storm. Storm windows at the first and second floor of the street elevation and the first floor of the rear and side elevations have divided lights matching the pattern of the window sash below. The window casing at the clapboard and shingle walls project past the siding. The window casing at the masonry walls is recessed.
- Louvered wood shutters fastened to the window casing at most exterior windows
- Six paneled painted wood door set within a wood surround with an elliptical fanlight at main entrance. Sidelights are located at each side of the door with three divided lights over a solid panel. The doorway is framed with pairs of wood pilasters.
- Secondary entrances at the two brick end walls. Each of these doors has a six-paneled wood door set within a molded casing with a semi-circular fanlight above. The top two panels of the east door (now the main museum entrance) have been replaced with glass.
- One 6-over-6 double-hung sash in a window opening adjacent to the east side of the main building at the street elevation of the service ell and four similar windows at the rear elevation. There is one small fixed-sash window between the doors at the street elevation.
- Two large arched openings at the west side of the street elevation of the service ell infilled with wood lattice screens that have narrow wood casings at the perimeter of the opening with wood “keystones”.
- Two large rectangular openings at the east side of the street elevation of the service ell that have double-leaf doors and more elaborate wood casing with a cornice head over each door.

Projections:

- Wooden single entrance porch at the main entrance that has a hipped roof supported by pairs of wood columns, a typical feature of Federal Style buildings.
- Exterior concrete terrace on a rubble foundation at the rear elevation added in the late 19th/early 20th Century.
- Wood stairs with wood banisters and rails at most entrances.

Trim and Secondary Features:

- Flat painted wood fascia and corner boards. Few other areas of trim.

Materials

- Painted brick sidewalls. Bricks laid in a Flemish bond pattern.
- Wood clapboard at the street elevation of both the house and service ell.
- Wood shingles at rear elevation of both the house and service ell.
- Granite-faced brick and rubble foundation wall at the main building. Windows to the basement level are set between the granite units at the street elevation.

Significant Interior Features

Individually Important Spaces

Main building primary stair hall

- Curved staircase with a half landing. The stair rail consists of thin balusters supporting a narrow wood handrail. The handrail terminates at the first floor in a spiral with a decorative central button and extends across the landing at the second floor, terminating at the wall. The stair has stylized scrollwork along the face string.
- Wood wainscot at the walls with flat plaster above.
- Flat plaster ceiling and flat plaster at the underside of the staircase.
- Six paneled interior doors with simple molded wood door casing.
- Wide random-width wood plank flooring nailed to the joists below.

Main building interior

- Relationship and layout of rooms. Larger more formal spaces are typically located towards the street elevation with the service elements grouped at the rear. First floor spaces are more formal and less altered than those found at the second floor.
- Fireplaces in the major spaces of the first and second floor. Each has a wood surround with raised pilasters, square panels and a wood mantelpiece.
- Large brick fireplace with a simple wooden surround and mantelpiece in the first floor space that originally contained the kitchen.
- Wood wainscot at the walls of the first floor rooms with flat plaster above.
- Wood crown moldings at many of the rooms at both the first and second floor.
- Flat plaster ceilings.
- Six paneled interior doors with simple molded wood door casing.
- Simple molded wood casing at the window surrounds similar to that found at the doorways.
- Wide random-width wood plank flooring nailed to the joists below at the first floor, the storage room at the second floor and the attic. Other rooms at the second floor have had their flooring replaced or covered over.
- Narrow secondary staircase at the rear of the building with extensions to the basement and attic.
- Original wood roof structural elements visible at the attic ceiling.

Main building basement

- Exposed rubble and brick foundation walls at the perimeter of the room.
- The brick well of the original saltbox structure is incorporated into the basement of the main building.

Service Ell

- Exposed wood structural elements visible at the ceiling of the archive room.

PART 2 –Images



Figure 3: Main entrance door with Federal Style surround and porch.



Figure 4: Transition from wood clapboard to brick at the southwest corner of building.



Figure 5: Detail of elliptical fanlight.



Figure 6: Window with exterior storm.

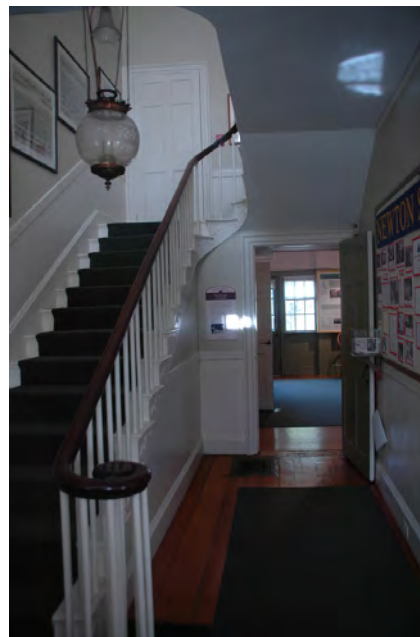


Figure 7: Interior stair hall.

Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations

Recommended Treatment Level

The Jackson Homestead's exterior has been meticulously preserved maintained. Work on the exterior was performed in 2009, and the majority of materials found on the exterior of the building are currently in good condition. The interior, while somewhat altered to support the building's role as a museum space, retains a large amount of its character-defining material. The recommended treatment for the Homestead is the "Preservation" level of treatment outlined in the U. S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The Preservation treatment level assumes that the majority of the building materials and significant features have survived unchanged over time. The emphasis of this treatment is to protect these elements through maintenance and repair. If additional renovations to the interior are needed to modify the exhibit space or comply with accessibility requirements alterations should strive to maintain the overall arrangement of the rooms and the existing distinction between primary and secondary spaces. Significant features listed in Part 2 should be protected as much as possible.

The following bulleted list contains an analysis of existing conditions and recommended treatments for the significant features catalogued in Part 2 of this report.

Exterior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Repair an area of rotted wood at the edge of the gutter at the southwest corner of the building. Any defects in the concealed gutter liner that may be contributing to this condition should be corrected. The deteriorated wood should be patched with a wood dutchman matching the existing gutter profile and the wood repainted.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Repair area of deteriorated wood shingles adjacent to the rear door and stairs into the service ell. The stair drainage should be investigated and improved.
- Repair the broken hinge at the first floor shutter at the north side of the west elevation. Ensure all shutters are sitting properly on their supports and re-seat shutters as required.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of exterior character-defining features.
- When the existing asphalt shingle roofs at the main building and service ell reach the end of their lifespan (typically 15-20 years from date of installation) replacement with wood shingles or composite shingles more closely resembling wood could be considered.

Interior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Isolated areas of plaster damage and peeling paint were noted at the flat plaster ceilings of the second floor. It should be determined if these are areas of active water infiltration or if they were addressed by the roof repairs of 2009. Once the source of the moisture infiltration is identified and corrected the ceilings should be carefully patched, retaining the largest amount of historic material possible.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Identify sources of moisture infiltration responsible for staining and discoloration of the paint surface of the basement walls. The sources of this moisture infiltration should be identified and repaired. The walls can then be repainted.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of interior character-defining features.
- Alterations should protect and preserve as much of the existing historic building fabric and overall arrangement of the major interior spaces as possible.