

Supplemental Attachments for HISTORIC RESOURCES PROPOSALS

18 August 2020

1. Analysis of Historical Significance (narrative; min. 1 paragraph - max. 1 page)

The Durant-Kenrick House is a National Register of Historic Places property and a City of Newton Certified Landmark. Its significance is well described in the National Register nomination form prepared in 1975 by Judy D. Dobbs, National Register Editor and Susan Weiss and Norman Weiss of the Massachusetts Historical Commission:

"The Captain Edward Durant House is significant as the home of the wealthy and prominent Edward Durant and as one of the oldest extant structures in Newton, Massachusetts.

Edward Durant was born in Boston in 1695, the third son of Edward and Anne Hall Durant. His father kept the "Inn at the Sign of the Lamb," a famous Boston public house. The younger Durant was a "smith" and also served in a variety of public offices in Boston. He is termed "Captain" in a number of public records, and his raised pew at Old South Church bespoke his position of prominence in the city. In 1732 Durant purchased 91 acres in Newton and built "a Dwelling House two barns and other out Housing" He served as Selectman in 1739 and died in the fall of 1740 leaving an estate valued at more than £11,000 including other properties in Boston and western Massachusetts.

At his death, Captain Durant's eldest child Edward assumed the Newton property. Edward, a 1735 graduate of Harvard College, continued the family spirit of public service by housing the town grammar school in - the 1760's.- He served numerous positions in pre-Revolutionary patriotic activities in Newton, including "Chairman of the Committee of five to express public opinion on the state of affairs of the Colony, and to instruct Representatives in the General Court." In January 1774, Durant was elected Chairman of the Colony's Committee of Correspondence, and he was also a delegate to the Provincial Congress. His sons, Dr. Edward Durant, a regimental surgeon, Thomas and Allen, both Minutemen at the battle at Lexington, and Nathaniel, lived in the Newton house and contributed from it to the American cause.

After the death of Edward Durant in 1782, the Newton property was sold to the Kenricks, one of the original Newton families. The Kenricks established a noted nursery in 1790, and it is believed that some of the venerable trees on the present grounds in the surrounding neighborhood were part of their plantings. The Captain Edward Durant House remained in the Kenrick family until 1903. Shortly thereafter, it was acquired by Frederick C. Durant, and thus returned to its original family ownership. In 1923, Arthur S. Dewing, Harvard professor, antiquarian, and Durant descendant, purchased the house and later established the Edward Durant Homestead Trust."

2. Description of Historically Significant Features (keyed to attachment 1; max. 1 page)

Also from the National Register nomination form:

“In addition to its historical significance, the Captain Edward Durant House is distinguished by several remarkable architectural features.

First and foremost of these is its very survival, as relatively few houses in Newton predate the Revolution. It is an early example of the four-room plan with central passage, and the scale and proportion of the rooms are extraordinarily grand for a country house of this date.

Three specific features are also worthy of note. Four rooms have stencil-decorated floors, c.1790, among the earliest extant in New England. The window seats and interior shutters in the "North Room" are another rarity. Finally, the survival of a portion of the original roof, including weatherboards, shingles, and flashing, represents a major document in the history of 18th century construction.”

Indeed, according to the McGinley, Kaslow, and Associates, Architects and Preservation Planners, report from 2006:

“...the narrowness of the windows are particularly suggestive of the building's 1730s construction date.”

“... The exterior walls retain quite a few early clapboards that are distinguishable by their skived ends and their relatively narrow weathers. The early clapboards survive in the greatest numbers on the south and north walls. On the south wall, in fact, a more or less regular line of skived clapboard ends shows where the earlier roofline ended and clapboards were added to cover the new portion of the wall created when the roof was raised.”

“The window and molded window caps are also characteristic of Georgian exterior woodwork.... The windows and their trim are similar to and almost identical in size with those of the Hancock Clarke House [in Lexington, MA].”

These features remain today.

3. Summary & Justification of Proposed Treatment (keyed to attachment 2; max. 1 page)

Historic Newton would like to address the water infiltration issues on the eastern facing portion of the house, by replacing the ineffective gutter and restoring the windows to water-tight condition. The restoration will also prevent continued damage to the structure and will ensure that the windows are longer lasting. The six compromised, original windows were damaged by a leak in the fire suppression system inside that area of the building as well as by excess rainwater not controlled by the gutter and downspout. These repairs will also prevent water infiltration from harming the collections housed in the museum in addition to helping to ensure the structure's longevity.

As water is one of the most damaging forces in an historic building, we feel this is a preservation priority for the structure. In terms of the window sash, currently much of the wood is exposed to the elements and the glazing is crumbling. It is wise to repair these windows now before more damage will be done. Currently, very little repair needs to be done to the wood while delaying repair will make the project more costly.

In terms of the federal Standards for historic buildings, the gutter project will be a *rehabilitation* in that the replacement is based on period gutters. The window work is a *preservation* project meant to preserve and extend the life of 18th-century windows which retain much original fabric.

4. Newton Historical Commission confirmation of local historic significance, if the resource is not already on the National register of Historic Places.

N/A. The resource is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Newton Certified Landmark.