

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	NWT.1669
Historic Name:	Railroad Hotel
Common Name:	Davis Hotel - West Newton Hotel
Address:	978-982 Watertown St 1265-1269, 1273-1279 Washington St
City/Town:	Newton
Village/Neighborhood:	West Newton
Local No:	3069, 31005 0001
Year Constructed:	c 1831
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Federal; Greek Revival
Use(s):	Business Office; Cobbler; Commercial Block; General Retail Store; Hotel or Inn; Restaurant
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce
Area(s):	NWT.Y: Newton Multiple Resource Area - 1636-1907 NWT.Z: Newton Multiple Resource Area - 1908-1940 NWT.AM: West Newton Village Center Historic District
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (09/04/1986); Nat'l Register MRA (09/04/1986); Nat'l Register District (02/16/1990); Nat'l Register MRA (02/16/1990)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Brick; Brick Veneer; Brown Stone; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Friday, April 30, 2021 at 9:55: AM

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

31005 0001 Newton Y, Z, AM NWT.1669
Designations: NRIND NRMRA (1986) NRDIS NRMRA (1990)

Town/City: Newton

Place: West Newton

Photograph



Address: 978-982 Watertown Street (also 1265-1269 Washington Street, and 1273-1279 Washington Street)

Historic Name: Davis Hotel/West Newton Hotel/Railroad Hotel

Uses: Present: Commercial

Original: Commercial

Date of Construction: c.1831

Source: plaque, documentary sources

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: brick

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations:

Fire damage to interior (1939)

Existing storefront replaced (1953)

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 13,540 square feet

Setting: Set in commercial row of stores in village center of West Newton

Locus Map



Recorded by: Katy Hax Holmes

Organization: City of Newton

Date: 3/2011

RECEIVED
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MASS. HIST. COMM.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

NEWTON

978-982 WATERTOWN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Y, Z

NWT.1669

 Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

This three and a half story commercial building has a five bay façade beneath a gabled roof. Windows on the third-story façade are small rectangular sash, with simple wooden trim. Sash windows on the second story are double the size. Brick discoloration on the building suggests there were once lintels, and that the center window on the second story was the largest on the façade. Windows on the second story are now uniform in size. Pairs of sash windows in each gable-end have an ogee peak, an unusual feature, now filled with louvers. Windows that were once hung at street level have been replaced by a late 19th century storefront with plate glass windows. An existing full storefront was replaced in the 1950s. The main block is five bays deep, with a plaque filling the space where a second-story window once hung (see below). Stone lintels remain on the second-story west side windows. The rear façade is also five bays in width but is four stories in height, with similar window fenestration and central entrance. Windows on the proper first story are the largest, in keeping with the Federal Style. What were once two pairs of interior chimneys, two front and two in back, is now a single pair of symmetrically placed brick chimneys on the north rear slope of the gable roof. Skylights are randomly placed on both slopes of the roof.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

This building appears on the 1831 map but there is no name next to it. In 1848, this dot appears with 'Hotel.' In 1855, 1856, the building appears on the maps as 'Railroad House.' Seth Davis (1788-1888), local teacher, builder and centenarian, built a hotel at this location to take advantage of the stagecoach line from the train to points west. His was one of the first major commercial investments in West Newton as it was making its transition from a farming village to commercial center. By 1834 the train came through West Newton, which still brought business to the hotel. Since being converted from a hotel, this building has housed dry goods merchants, a shoemaker, a restaurant, café, TV repair, and other retail uses.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES:

"Newton's Older Houses: West Newton, Massachusetts." 1978.
Birds Eye map West Newton, 1890
City of Newton, City Hall, Engineering maps, Engineering Department
City of Newton, City Hall, Water records, Water Department
City of Newton, Newton City Hall. Building jackets for: 1273-1279 Washington Street, Inspectional Services Department.
City of Newton, www.newtonma.gov, Assessors Online database, Deed Research / City Atlases
Historic Newton, Inc., Newton Historical Commission, Department of Planning and Development. "Newton's 19th Century Architecture: West Newton"
Jackson Homestead, information in folder for property (Kathlyn Hatch, Peter Stott, 1978 and 1986)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

NEWTON

978-982 WATERTOWN STREET

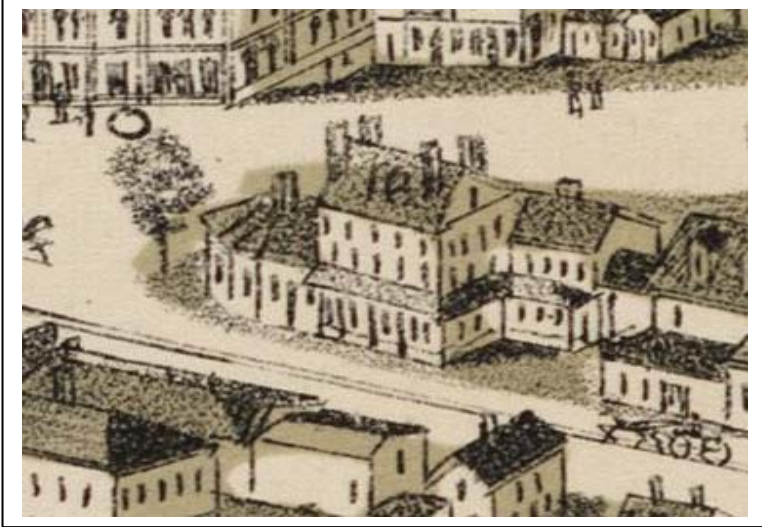
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

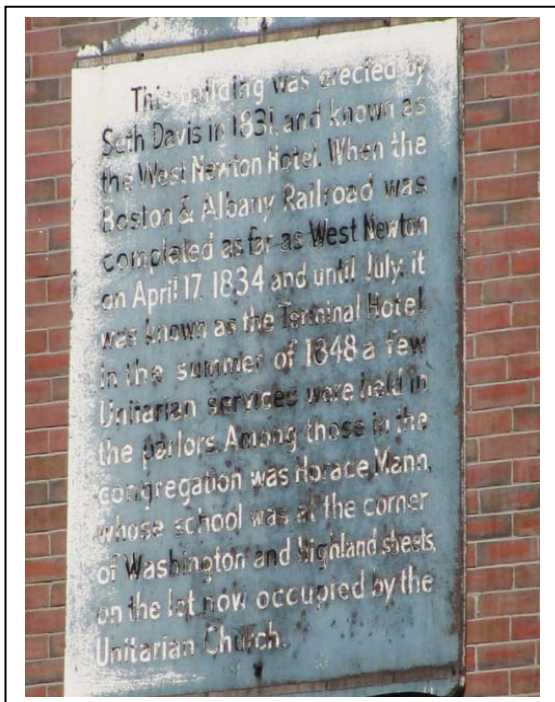
Y, Z

NWT.1669

ADDITIONAL IMAGES:



1890 Birdseye map



Building plaque

FORM B - BUILDING

NRIND 9/4/86
 NRMRA 9/4/86
 NRDIS 2/16/90
 NRMRA 2/16/90

AREA	FORM NO.
AM, Y, Z	<u>3069</u>

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 80 BOYLSTON STREET
 BOSTON, MA 02116



Newton, Mass. MRA
 NEWTON (West Newton)
 978 Watertown Street
 Address 1273 1279 Washington St.
 Historic Name Railroad Hotel
 Present Shops & offices
 Original Hotel
 Description
1831
 Source Newton Histories
 Style Federal/Greek Revival

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).
Indicate north

Architect unknown
 Exterior Wall Fabric brick
 Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) _____
20th cent. storefronts

Condition Good

Moved no Date ---

Acres 13,540 sq. ft.

Setting Prominent corner lot at intersection of Washington & Watertown streets, center of W. Newton village

(SEE ATTACHED MAP)

UTM REFERENCE 19.316620.4690750

USGS QUADRANGLE NEWTON, MA

SCALE 1:25,000

Recorded by Kathlyn Hatch, Peter Stott

Organization Newton Historical Comm.

Date January 1978, April 1986

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

As an unusual and well-preserved example of a brick hotel, and for its associations with Seth Davis and the growth of West Newton, the Railroad Hotel meets criteria A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

This three-story brick hotel building, located at West Newton's most important intersection, is believed to be West Newton's oldest remaining commercial structure. Many of the hotel's original architectural features remain, although the ground level has been altered, its steep, symmetrical chimneys removed, and changes made to the fenestration pattern on two elevations. Its most notable architectural detail is the louvered Gothic windows at the gable level.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Railroad Hotel was erected in 1831 by Seth Davis (1787-1888), one of Newton's most prominent residents. A noted teacher, lecturer, and author, Davis also amassed a small fortune based on his real estate investments in West Newton. Davis Street, Davis Court, and Davis Avenue, part of his extensive holdings, were named after him, as was the Davis School on Waltham Street. Erected with red hand-made brick (as was his own house on Eden Avenue [#3073] a few years before), the building represented a major capital investment in the small village of West Newton at the time of its construction.

The building took its present name when the Boston & Worcester Railroad was completed to West Newton in April 1834. Until July of that year the hotel served passengers connecting from the railhead to other forms of transportation. For this reason, the building became known as the "railroad" or "terminal" hotel, a name that is still in current use. Here the railroad directors held a grand fete on the opening of the railroad to West Newton in April 1834. Ten years later, the Unitarians held their first public meetings in a hall in the hotel. In the 1860s known as the West-Newton Hotel, the inn was operated by Artemas H. Cushman. Stephen F.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Friends of the Jackson Homestead, Newton's Older Houses: West Newton (1978), p. 48.
 "Stephen F. Cate," Newton Journal 7 August 1896, p. 5.
Newton's 19th Century Architecture: West Newton (1978)
 M.F. Sweetser, King's Handbook of Newton, Massachusetts (Boston: Moses King, 1889).
 Atlases: 1874, 1886, 1895, 1907.
 City Directories: 1881, 1883, 1891, 1893.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

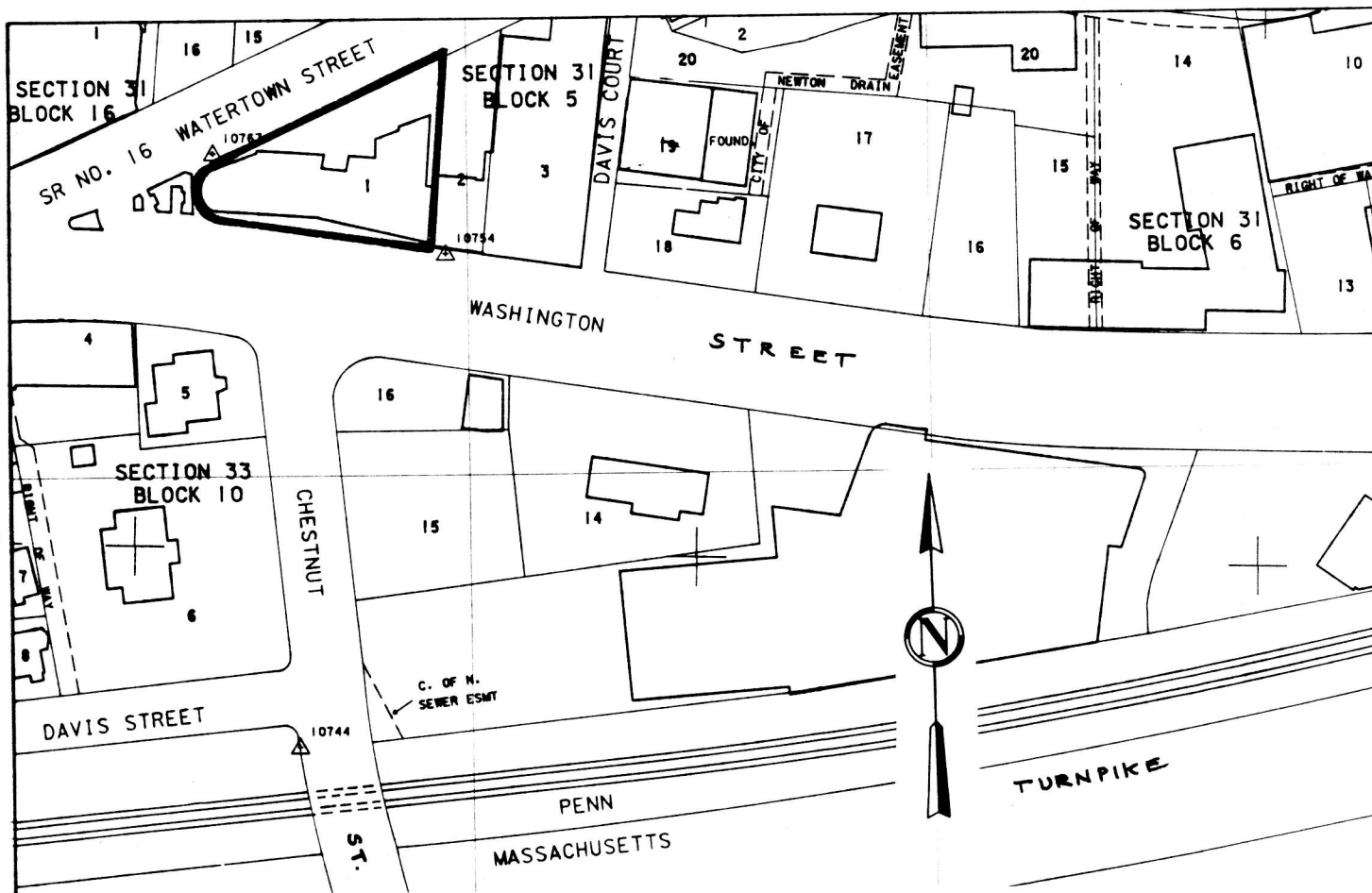
Community:	Form No:
Newton, Mass. MRA	3069
Property Name: Railroad Hotel	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

Cate's livery stable stood immediatly to the rear, an important asset to the hotel's business. (Begun in 1861, Cate's was the oldest and best-known livery business in Newton. When the Waltham and Newton Street Railway was started by Royal E. Robbins of Waltham in September 1868, Mr. Cate became its first superintendent, and for several years the first car stables were at Cate's livery stable.) For a brief period in the 1870s, the building became a boarding house.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



City of Newton Assessor's Maps. Sheet 42
 Metric Series. 1979
 Scale: UTM grid line interval = 100 meters (328 feet)

Newton, Mass. MRA
 1273-79 Washington St., West Newton
 (Railroad Hotel)
 31-5-1

NR100
NRMRA

In Area no.	Form no.
77	3069 1669



N

1. Town West Newton
 Address 1273-1279 Washington Street
978 WATERSTOWN ST.

Name _____
 Present use Commercial/Residential

Present owner Newton Cooperative Bank

3. Description:

Date 1831

Source Newton histories

Style Federal/Greek Revival

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric Brick, brick veneer

Outbuildings (describe) _____

Other features Gothic Revival style

gable windows, brownstone trim;

20th century stores attached

Siding,

Altered Storefronts Date 20th c.

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less X Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 175' x 180'

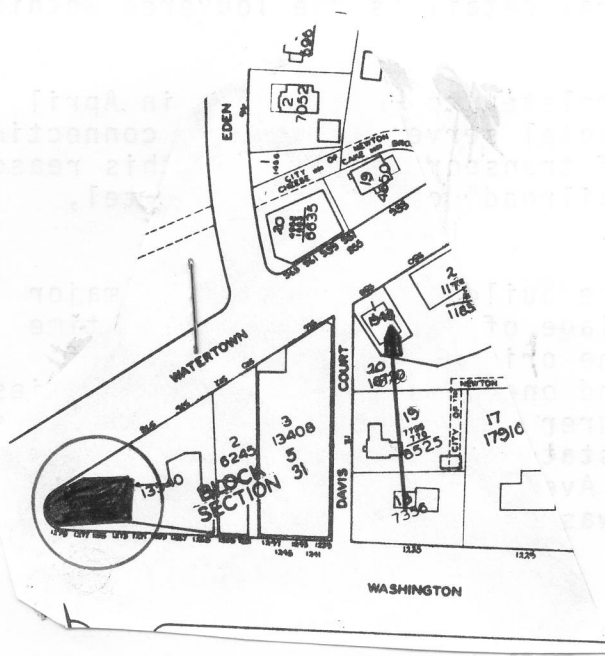
Approximate distance of building from street

5'

6. Recorded by Kathlyn Hatch

Organization Newton Historical Commission

Date January 16, 1978



NEWTON
 19.316620 4690750

(over)

Major Significance
 Minor Significance

Contributing Significance
 No Significance

7. Original owner (if known) _____

Original use Hotel

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Storefronts, apartments

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u>X</u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This brick hotel building, located at West Newton's most important intersection, was erected by Seth Davis in 1831. It is probably the village's oldest remaining commercial structure.

Many of the hotel's original architectural features remain, although the ground level has been altered, its steep, symmetrical chimneys removed, and changes made to the fenestration pattern on two elevations. Its most notable architectural detail is the louvered Gothic windows at the gable level.

The Boston & Albany railroad was completed to West Newton in April, 1834. Until July of that year the hotel served passengers connecting from the rail head to other forms of transportation. For this reason the building became known as the "railroad" or "terminal" hotel, a name that is still in current use.

Erected with red hand-made brick, the building represented a major capital investment in the small village of West Newton at the time of its construction. Seth Davis, the original owner, was one of Newton's most prominent residents and one of the village's wealthiest men as well. A noted teacher, lecturer and author, Davis also amassed a small fortune based on his real estate investments in West Newton. Davis Street, Davis Court and Davis Avenue, part of his extensive holdings, were named after him, as was the Davis School on Waltham Street.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Atlases 1907, 1895, 1886, 1874.

Bird's Eye View of West Newton (1890).

Friends of the Jackson Homestead. Newton's Older Houses: West Newton (1978), pp. 8-9, 29-31.

Photographs, Archives of the Jackson Homestead.