**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**NAME**

HISTORIC: The First Parish; Upper Green

AND/OR COMMON: Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: High Road, Green Street, Hanover Street

CITY, TOWN: Newbury

STATE: Massachusetts

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<td>_OCCUPIED</td>
<td>_AGRICULTURE</td>
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<td>_UNOCCUPIED</td>
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**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME: Multiple

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Essex County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER: 32 Federal Street

CITY, TOWN: Salem

STATE: Massachusetts

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE: Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

HABS (MASS-472, 468, 300, 469)

DATE: 1975 (Massachusetts)

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN: Boston (and Washington, DC)

STATE: Massachusetts 02108
The Newbury Historic District is located in the center of the town of Newbury and is characterized by a wide range of domestic, civic, educational, religious, cultural and commercial structures, all of which face either High Road, the main thoroughfare, or the town green, known as the Upper Green. Contiguous to one another in this rural townscape, the buildings in the district continue to serve as the community center of Newbury.

The Newbury Historic District is composed of forty structures spanning four centuries of development. Most of them date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, there is an unusually high concentration of buildings (nearly a third) which date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While most are residential buildings, those for civic, educational and even commercial use continue to maintain a domestic scale, represent for the most part the anonymous local building tradition, and are principally of frame construction with clapboard or shingle exteriors. The District also includes The First Parish Burying Ground on High Road which dates from the time of the first settlement in the mid-seventeenth century. There are also a number of commemorative works on the Upper Green, among them the Arnold monument (A) and the Soldiers and Sailors Civil War Monument. (B).

The oldest structure in the district is the Tristram Coffin House (#35), 1654, which represents one of the outstanding examples of First Period architecture in New England and is the most important seventeenth century house in the District. It is set in deeply from High Road on a lot with a creek just beyond its western edge. A recent examination of one of the posts in the original portion for dendro-chronological corroboration resulted in a reading of about 1654. This portion facing south was enlarged with a First Period addition. A more extensive enlargement occurred after 1750, expanding the house to its present size while establishing a new orientation facing east. By 1785 all major elements of the house as it now stands were named in a division of the property. The east facade facing the High Road continues the seventeenth century use of unpainted clapboarding, vertical chimneys and vernacular character of the original portion; its organization is now regularized and classicized so that its entrance and fenestration are symmetrically disposed into five bays, two and one-half stories in height. The placement of windows on the south facade reflects the additive nature of the house.

The Henry Sewall House (#31) is purported to have been built by Henry Sewall, Jr., between 1660 when he purchased the land and 1678 when the house was named in his will of that date. The U-shaped plan reflects a collection of additions and alterations. The house has two entrances: one to the east on High Road; the other to the south on Parker Street. In the twentieth century this two-story structure, like others in the district, was "colonialized" with its formerly unpainted clapboarding now painted white and the addition of black shutters.

The Dr. Peter Toppan House (#2), 1697, is a fine example of a First Period structure whose gambrel roof and overhang are evident on the west elevation facing High Road. The unpainted shingles and clapboards of the restored exterior duplicate its original wall fabric, similar in treatment to the unpainted clapboarding of the Coffin House (#36) and Short House (#15). The presence of two central fireplaces and the somewhat irregular design of its windows, despite their symmetrical disposition into five bays, is residual evidence that the house had formerly been divided into a duplex arrangement.
The Luther Dame House (#35), 1876, is a mansarded structure set back from High Road in a natural setting. Its prevailing axial organization and so-called "wedgewood" treatment of yellow clapboarding with white trim convey the strength of residual Federal motifs. A cupola, like that at 35 High Road (#13) quotes the architectural features of the house itself. Further, a similar use of post-Civil War architectural elements, including bracketed cornice, entrance and projecting bay windows, as well as the decorative treatment of slate and dormers of the mansarded roof show a design informed by restrained picturesque eclecticism.

A number of other houses in the District are informed by a nineteenth century interpretation of colonial forms. These include the Deacon N. Little House (#26), c. 1825, whose planar approach to each elevation of this frame structure reflects traditional eighteenth century treatment, while its entrance on the gable end facing Green Street, and granite foundation evidence a strong Greek Revival influence. The Reverend Leonard Withington House (#7), 1843, and the Hale-Knight House (#33), 1880, illustrate other houses in the District which reflect the survival of eighteenth century colonial forms and geometric massing characteristic of the Greek Revival period.

The District also contains a number of twentieth century buildings including two notable civic and educational structures as well as a number of domestic structures, two of which are representative. These four works exemplify different aspects of Colonial Revival architecture or mid-twentieth century (more recent) interpretations by local builders.

The Woodbridge School (#12) was built in 1898 as a two-room structure and enlarged to its present size in 1908. This two-story frame building, cruciform in plan, is an important example of Colonial Revival architecture. Its projecting entrance enclosed within the wall plane reflects an American interpretation of the ubiquitous Palladian temple front. Engaged ionic columns flank the door, and an oculus punctuates the pediment above.

The Town Hall (#8) was originally built in the early part of the twentieth century as the town grange and was remodeled to its present state after a fire c. 1927 to serve as the Town Hall. This one-story structure with shingle exterior and projecting entrance portico maintains a low, crisp profile. Its essentially vernacular character and domestic scale are in harmony with other structures in the townscape.

The Houses at 20 Green Street (#21), 1900, and at 2 Green Street (#29), c. 1940 are two representative examples of the survival of colonial forms into the twentieth century. The house at 20 Green Street (#21) is a provincial example of turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival. The large scale, symmetrical organization and marked verticality of this three-story elevation with hip roof and tall chimneys, characterize the house as a product of Queen Anne influence. The house at 2 Green Street (#29), is a fine example of a two-story structure with gambrel roof and exterior of unpainted

(continued)
The Newbury Historic District is significant for its fine grouping of buildings—particularly its seventeenth and eighteenth century houses—and for its associations with the early development of the Town of Newbury. The area has continued to function as the community focus from the time the new settlement was established in 1646, subsequent to the town's incorporation in 1635 at another location farther up the Parker River, until the present.

The focal point of the district is the Upper Green which was originally known as the "trayneing green" and was laid out in 1642 to serve as the center of the new settlement. During the Revolutionary War the Green was the site of a troop encampment on September 18-19, 1775 under the command of Benedict Arnold. A stone marker, the Arnold Monument, was placed on the Upper Green in the late nineteenth century to commemorate this event. Another memorial, the Soldiers and Sailors Civil War Monument, is also located there. In the mid-nineteenth century a brick schoolhouse was located on the Green. The Newbury Upper Green continues to serve as the town common. Recently the scene of a Bicentennial observance of the 1775 Arnold encampment, the Upper Green is frequently used for other celebrations and recreation activities.

When the new settlement was established in 1646 as the First Parish, a meetinghouse was erected at the northwest corner of the First Parish Burying Ground. Successive meetinghouses were built on this site in 1661, 1700 and 1806. When a fire destroyed the latter church building in 1868, another site was chosen for the erection of a new structure on the west side of High Road, directly across from the old meetinghouse. The First Parish Church was completed in 1869 and according to church records, the design was the work of local architect, Col. Fred J. Coffin.

In the nearby First Parish Burying Ground are contained the graves of many of Newbury's first settlers and their descendants. These include those of Tristram Coffin and his wife Judith who died in 1703 and 1705 respectively, Henry Sewall (d. 1700) and the Reverend John Tucker (d. 1792).

The Woodbridge School is located on the site of the house built in 1663 by the Reverend John Woodbridge, teacher and landowner. The school continues to provide the children of the community with primary school education.

A number of the houses in the district possess important associations with the history of the town. The Henry Sewall House was the home of a Newbury resident whose son Samuel Sewall later became Council member and Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Dr. Peter Toppan House was the residence of the town physician for whom it was built in 1697. Three additional historic houses now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities function as house museums, helping to

(continued)
shingles, so like the Dr. Peter Toppan House (#2), which remains a successful twentieth century interpretation of seventeenth century New England domestic building in harmony with its architectural environment.

transmit a sense of the cultural life of Newbury's past into the present.

The Tristram Coffin House (Massachusetts Historic Landmark; HABS: MASS-472) was continuously occupied by the Coffin family from 1654 when it was built by one of Newbury's first settlers, Tristram Coffin, until its acquisition by SPNEA in 1929. The seven succeeding generations of occupants participated actively in the socio-economic, political and educational life of the town. One of the family members was Joshua Coffin, town clerk, teacher of John Greenleaf Whittier and author of the History of Newbury, Newburyport and West Newbury from 1635 to 1846. The Coffin house has frequently been cited for a number of outstanding features: the original kitchen accommodating a generous fireplace and a rare example of an eighteenth and nineteenth century built-in dresser; the upper west chamber containing an early plaster of clay and straw with exposed boards (perhaps eighteenth century); a buttery with pine woodwork preserved in its original state; and a collection of Coffin family furniture.

The Swett-Ilsley House (HABS: MASS-300), forming the northwest boundary to the district, was built by one of the first settlers, Stephen Swett. The house was built in the seventeenth century and underwent a series of additions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when it was also used as a "tobacconist business," a chocolate mill, and a tavern. Since 1911, when it became the first property to be acquired by SPNEA, the Swett-Ilsley House has served as a house museum.

The Short House (HABS: MASS-468) forms the southeast boundary to the district. It remains one of Newbury's most celebrated and well-published domestic buildings, and since its acquisition in 1928 by SPNEA has served as a house museum with a fine collection of William and Mary furniture. In 1768 when Nicholas Pettingill, the local blacksmith, lived in the north half and John Brown in the south half, the Short House functioned as a duplex residence, similar to the arrangement of the Dr. Peter Toppan House, with the exception that the original Doric entrance to the Short House was preserved. The blacksmith shop, built by Pettingill in the mid-eighteenth century, still stands on the other side of the Upper Green, although greatly enlarged and altered as a house (#25).

The architectural significance of the district is displayed in the wide range of periods represented. There is an unusual number of well-preserved seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings in the district, as well as a larger number of nineteenth century buildings illustrating the variety of design in that century. As a whole, the grouping around and leading up to the Green clearly portray the development of Newbury from its early beginnings to the most recent decades of the twentieth century.
Re-evaluation of construction date due to dendrochronology

As a result of the dendrochronology testing of Phase I and Phase II of Coffin House in November of 2001, the construction date of the building has now been identified as 1678 for Phase I and 1713 for Phase II. The research team consisted of Daniel Miles and Michael Worthington of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, England, with Anne Grady of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) acting as liaison. Their report, cited below, presented the following results and conclusions. Twelve timbers were sampled, six from the Phase I west wing and six from the Phase II east cross-wing. Six of the samples matched one another and matched other masters in the area. Four of the samples from Phase I dated to the winter of 1676/7, with a fifth one dating one year later to 1677/78. The sixth sample was from the west cross-wing and also matched to the site master chronology, producing a felling date of winter 1712/13. A seventh sample, also from the cross-wing, dated individually and also gave a felling date of winter 1712/13. The study concluded, “The samples from the first phase matched reasonably well together, suggesting a similar source for the timber, and the closeness of the felling dates suggest a construction period during 1678. The two timbers which dated from the second phase suggests a construction period during 1713, or just possibly 1714.” (p. 20)


A note on dendrochronology dating

In recent years tree-ring chronologies have been developed for eastern Massachusetts and adjacent regions, and a number of buildings or parts of buildings have been evaluated and given new construction dates due to tree-ring dating, or dendrochronology. The principle behind tree-ring dating is a simple one: the seasonal variations in climate produce variations in growth which are reflected in the varying width of the annual rings of the tree. The rings in timbers from historical houses are compared with previously dated ring sequences from old-growth trees and from timber from structures with well-established dates to allow precise dates to be ascribed to each ring. Computer comparisons quantify how good the match is between the two. A dendrochronologist then analyzes the results and establishes the date the tree was felled. Some caution must be used in interpreting these dates to determine the construction date of a building. Sometimes timbers from the same construction phase of the same building have been felled one, two or more years apart. However, it was common practice to build timber-framed structures with green or unseasoned timber, and it is likely that construction was completed within twelve or eighteen months from the felling date.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Coffin, Joshua. The History of Newbury, Newburyport and West Newbury from 1635 to 1846. Boston, 1845.
Currier, John J. "Ould Newbury": Historical and Biographical Sketches. Boston: Damrell

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 38 acres

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1 9 3 4 7 6 8 0 4 7 4 0 2 8 0 B 1 9 3 4 7 9 8 0 4 7 3 9 5 8 0
C 1 9 3 4 7 6 1 0 4 7 3 9 3 8 0 D 1 9 3 4 7 5 2 0 4 7 4 0 2 2 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The northern boundary line begins 113' west of High Road at the northern property line of #40, and extends east across High Road to Marlboro Street and runs northeast to the back property line of #1, 100' east of High Road. The eastern boundary line of the District begins at the back property line of #1 and runs south along the back of properties #2 to #5, approximately 200' from High Road, extending along the back property line of the First Parish Burying Ground, and continuing along the back property line of properties which face High Road from #7 to #15.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE STATE CODE
COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Judy Dobbs, National Register Editor, and Mardges Bacon, S.P.N.E.A.

ORGANIZATION Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE February 18, 1976

STREET & NUMBER 294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE 617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN Boston

STATE Massachusetts

02108

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

DATE 2/23/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

u-d 888-445
#9:


#10:

The southern boundary line of the District begins at the back property line of #15, approximately 140' east of High Road and runs west across High Road to the back of properties #16, #17, and #18 at a distance of approximately 200' from Hanover Street. The western boundary line of the district begins at the southern property line of #19 and runs north along the back of properties #19 and #20 at a distance of approximately 250' from Green Street, and continues along the back of properties #27 to #34, and along the back of properties #35 and #36 at a distance of approximately 225' from High Road and properties #37 and #40 at a distance of approximately 200' from High Road.
**NEWBURY HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Newbury, Massachusetts

Key to Map:

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<th>ITEM NUMBER</th>
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<td>5. Abraham Toppan House (twentieth century reconstruction), 11 High Road</td>
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<td>40. Swett-Ilsley House (c. 1670), 4-6 High Road</td>
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NAME
HISTORIC
First Parish; Upper Green
AND/OR COMMON
Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

LOCATION
CITY. TOWN
Newbury
VICINITY OF
COUNTY
Essex
STATE
MA

MAP REFERENCE
SOURCE
USGS, Newburyport East Quadrangle
SCALE
1:24000
DATE
1966

REQUIREMENTS
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

Newbury Historic District

References:
47680/4740280
47980/4739580
47600/4739380
47520/4740220
1. Looking northwest, left to right: Hale-Knight House (#33), First Parish Church (#34), Luther Dame House (#35), Tristram Coffin House (#36). (Photograph: Mardges Bacon, 1975)
2. Looking southeast, left to right: Woodbridge School (#12), Short House (15), Rev. John Tucker House (# 16), Parsonage (# 17).

(Photograph: Mardges Bacon, 1975)
6. Facing east: The First Parish Church (#34), Luther Dame House (#35).
(Photograph: Mardges Bacon, 1975)
Newbury Historic District, Newbury (Essex Co.), MA

8. Facing east: Town Hall (#8). (Photograph: Mardges Bacon, 1975)
Newbury Historic District, Newbury (Essex Co.), MA

Newbury Historic District, Newbury (Essex Co.), MA

10. Facing west: 1920s residence, 2 Green Street (#29). (Photograph: Mardges Bacon, 1975)
NAME
HISTORIC The First Parish; Upper Green
AND/OR COMMON Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

LOCATION
CITY TOWN Newbury
VICINITY OF
COUNTY Essex
STATE MA

PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT Mardges Bacon
DATE OF PHOTO 1975
NEGATIVE FILED AT Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Looking northwest, left to right: Hale-Knight House (#33), First Parish Church (#34), Luther Dame House (#35), Tristram Coffin House (#36).

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM
SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

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The First Parish; Upper Green

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PHOTO REFERENCE
Mardges Bacon

IDENTIFICATION
Facing southeast: Tristram Coffin House (#36).

NAME
First Parish; Upper Green

LOCATION
Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

PHOTO REFERENCE
Mardges Bacon

IDENTIFICATION
Facing east: Swett-Ilsley House (#40).
<table>
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<tr>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>Essex</td>
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<td>STATE</td>
<td>MA</td>
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<td>PHOTO REFERENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHOTO CREDIT</td>
<td>Mardges Bacon</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE OF PHOTO</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>NEGATIVE FILED AT</td>
<td>Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME &amp; STREET</td>
<td>Facing southwest: Short House (#15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facing east: The First Parish Church (#34), Luther Dame House (#35).
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME
HISTORIC
First Parish; Upper Green
AND/OR COMMON
Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN
Newbury
VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Essex
STATE
MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT
Mardges Bacon
DATE OF PHOTO
1975
Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114
NEGATIVE FILED AT

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Facing north: Woodbridge School (#12).

REQUIREMENTS
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME
HISTORIC
First Parish; Upper Green
AND/OR COMMON
Newbury Historic District (Preferred)

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN
Newbury
VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Essex
STATE
MA

3 MAP REFERENCE
SOURCE
Sketch map drawn by Mardges Bacon
SCALE
1" = 200'
DATE
1975