HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

THE HANCOCK-CLARKE HOUSE

LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to express their appreciation to Susan Bennett, Executive Director of the Lexington Historical Society and Lee Yates, Archivist, for their assistance in the preparation of this report. Any report of this kind builds on the work of previous scholars. We would particularly like to acknowledge the past studies of the Hancock-Clarke House by Edwin B. Worthen, Jr. and S. Lawrence Whipple.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Only those sections with page numbers have been completed)

I. INTRODUCTION ..........................................................1

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ............... 2

III. SIGNIFICANCE
A. Historical ................................................................. 8
B. Architectural ............................................................12

IV. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
A. Ownership History Timeline .........................................15
B. History of Property Occupation and Use ......................... 17

V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS
A. Original Construction ...................................................23
B. Design Derivation
C. Overview of Building History .......................................31
D. Building History by Category
   1. Foundation and Site ...............................................50
   2. Framing and Exterior Walls .......................................53
      a. Framing
      b. Exterior Walls
   3. Sash and Doors .....................................................55
   4. Roof and Gutters ....................................................56
   5. Interiors
      Room 106. Study; west ell room ..................................57
      Room 107. Kitchen; east ell room ................................60
      Room 108. Keeping Room; southeast room .......................64
      Room 109. Entry; stairhall .........................................69
      Room 110. Main stair ................................................71
      Room 111. Hancock-Adams Bedroom;
                  parlor; southwest room ..................................74
      Room 201. North bedroom,
                  childrens’ bedroom .........................................82
      Room 202. South ell room .........................................85
      Room 203. Bedroom; southeast chamber;
                  Rev. Clarke’s study ..........................................87
      Room 204. Upstairs hall ...........................................90
      Room 205. Bedroom; Dorothy Quincy Room;
                  southwest chamber ........................................92
      Attic .................................................................94
   6. Utilities ............................................................96
Hancock-Clarke House | Historic Structure Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. SURVEY OF PHYSICAL CONDITION ........................................ 100

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .......................................................... 127

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................ 129

APPENDIX .................................................................................. 136

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are by Anne Grady or Deane Rykerson.
Floor plans of the Hancock-Clarke House with room numbers

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Deane Rykerson, draftsman
Floor plans of the Hancock-Clarke House with room numbers

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Deane Rykerson, draftsman
Floor plans of the Hancock-Clarke House with room numbers

ATTIC PLAN

Deane Rykerson, draftsman
I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Structure Report is undertaken as part of a larger project to repair and restore the Hancock-Clarke House, a National Historic Landmark, and to implement measures to accommodate new building uses and accessibility. The members of the Lexington Historical Society, stewards of the property for the past 111 years, oversaw the moving of the building from its original site in 1896 to save it from destruction and its return to that site in 1974. In 2005, the Society, seeing the need for a comprehensive plan to address the current physical and programmatic needs of this building, initiated a campaign to fund the present work. The initial phase for research, design, architectural and engineering studies, and preservation recommendations was funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund and by Community Preservation Act funds of the Town of Lexington. The project was carried out between June 2006 and April 2007.

Figure 1. Return of the Hancock-Clarke House to its original site November 1974. Richard Morehouse, photographer.
II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Hancock-Clarke House, significant for its associations with the beginnings of the American Revolution, for its status as one of the earliest house museums in New England and for its architectural merit, is composed of two historic sections. The south part of the Hancock-Clarke House, is two-and-one-half stories in height with a central chimney, a gabled roof and a slightly asymmetrical plan.

The north part is an ell two stories in height with a chimney at the north end, a gambrel roof and a second floor that is thirteen-and-one-half inches lower than that of the south part.

A reception area and exhibit space were added north of the ell in 1975 after the house was moved back to its original site. The new construction reproduced two earlier sheds shown in a mid-nineteenth century painting (see cover).

Figure 2. South part of the Hancock-Clarke House.

Figure 3. Right: Gambrel-roofed ell of the Hancock-Clarke House.
Dendrochronology studies, i.e. the use of tree ring patterns to date timbers, carried out in parallel with the current report, have provided the first definitive evidence that the two parts of the house were built at the same time. The dendrochronological findings indicate that the timbers for both parts of the house came from trees felled primarily in the winter of 1736-1737. Typically in that period the timbers would have been used while green or unseasoned. Thus, construction of the Hancock-Clarke House would have occurred in 1737 or 1738. The findings of the scientifically accurate tree-ring dating refute the long-held tradition that the ell was built in 1698 as Rev. John Hancock’s original dwelling.

It is understandable that the ell was thought to be a different, earlier building because it is so much lower and more modest than the south part of the house. Also, some of the methods of joining the ell to the front part of the house are highly unusual and could be interpreted to suggest that the components of the house were built separately at first.¹ Two considerations, however, in addition to the dendrochronological dating, support the conclusion that the two parts of the house were built as part of the same building campaign:

1. Physical examination revealed that, although the joining of the two parts of the house is unusual above the first floor, the construction at the first floor level is just what one would expect for coeval construction. The girders and joists of the ell are framed into north side of the sill of the south part of the house in a way that would have been very difficult to achieve after the initial construction. If the two parts of the house were joined after they were built, one would expect to see double framing at the junction that is absent in the Hancock-Clarke House.

¹ There is some evidence to suggest that the decision to construct the ell might have been made after construction of the gabled part of the house had begun, and that could explain some unusual features at the junction including a wall infill of brick nogging and horizontal sheathing on the north side of the studs of the gabled house, both of which were characteristic of exterior walls.
2. The fact that the ell is more modest in its finish materials does not rule out construction as part of the same building project. By the 1730s, service spaces were commonly placed in the rear of a dwelling, be it in a rear lean-to, a gabled wing or a gambrel-roofed ell as here. The spaces that housed these utilitarian functions were more modestly trimmed than the more formal social spaces in the front of a house, as observed here.

Other puzzling aspects of the ell that have led people in the past to question as to whether the house was all at once are the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the ell. The following discussion offers what seems to the authors to be the most plausible explanation for the choice of those dimensions and highlights some of the problems that resulted.

One solution to adding space at the rear of the front part of the house would have been to build a rear wing of equal height. Having the ell’s roof abut the rear wall of the gabled part of the house, as opposed to its roof, however, was cheaper. Once the decision was made to build a low ell, choosing a gambrel roof allowed for useable space on both floors if the second floor of the ell was made lower than that of the front part made sense. (The lower ceilings in the ell have surely contributed to the idea that it was an older building.) Construction of the ell with a lower second floor meant that the major framing timbers of the two parts of the house did not line up vertically for easy joining above the first floor.

The east/west dimensions of the ell also do not line up with the major framing of the front part of the house. Instead the ell is a foot too wide on the west side to line up with the northwest chimney post of the front part of the house. This raises the question of whether the ell was built to adjoin an earlier structure standing west of the ell and north of the parlor of the south part of the house. During the archaeological excavations of 1964-1965 by Roland Robbins, a cellar hole, known as 6-F3, was found in just that location. Robbins found artifacts dating from c.1700 to 1770, including diamond paned glass and lead cames used to secure the glass in early casement windows in the cellar hole. He concluded that the building on the cellar hole was a dwelling that had been torn down rather than being destroyed by fire. This may well have been the first house built by Rev. Hancock. Very likely the building on cellar hole 6-F3 coexisted with the house built in 1737-1738 for a while.²

² According to archaeologist Christa Baranek, the date of the artifacts found in the cellar does not necessarily indicate when the house on cellar hole 6-F3 was removed. The cellar hole might have remained open and been used as a repository for trash for a while before being filled in c. 1770. Christa Barenek, personal communication, Mar. 28, 2007.
The documentary record gives some insight into the history of building on the property, but does not help to locate Rev. Hancock’s original building or indicate the length of the existence of the house on 6-F3. In 1699, Rev. Hancock purchased 25 acres of land on both sides of the current Hancock Street with no house mentioned. By 1701, we know that Rev. Hancock had built a house on the property because an adjoining property is described in a deed as being “near Hancock’s dwelling house.”

In 1734, Rev. Hancock deeded his (by then) 50-acre property, containing one mansion house and one barn to his son Ebenezer, who had joined him as the second minister in Lexington in 1733. Ebenezer paid his father £300 and agreed to forego his inheritance worth £400. In an indenture at the same time, Ebenezer granted his parents life tenancy in the property, though he retained use of “half” of the house. No explanation is given for the arrangement, but the financial benefit to the senior Hancocks may have been the overriding concern. Rev. Hancock was 62 at the time. Perhaps he anticipated that he would not be able to continue to serve as minister for very long and wanted to provide for his widow after his death. The irony is that Ebenezer, in spite of intending to provide for his parents, died at age 30 in 1740, never having married, while his father continued as minister until he died in 1752.

Several entries in the Town Records of Lexington confirm the findings of the dendrochronology study that construction was being carried out on the Hancock property in 1737-1738. Ebenezer Hancock, separately from his financial agreement with his father at the time that his father

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3 Middlesex County Registry of Deeds 35-258.
5 Middlesex County Registry of Deeds 35-259.
6 Hancock Family Papers, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Box 6, Folder 2.
7 Lexington Town Records, typescript transcription, Envelope 2 (1713-1815), Warrant and actions of the Town Meeting, May 11, 1738, p. 184-185. Town Clerk’s Office.
8 Ibid., p. 138.
deeded him the property, was promised £300 by the Town of Lexington as part of his ministerial settlement in 1733. The settlement was to be paid to him at his father’s death. In May of 1738, however, Rev. Ebenezer Hancock requested and received from the Town of Lexington an advance of £100 pounds of his £300 settlement. According to the Town Records, Ebenezer received the advance because of his “being of great charge about his building.” A second reference at the time specifies that timber could be taken from the ministerial land only if it was unfit for Mr. Hancock’s use, implying that the Hancocks needed all the construction timber they could get.

The tradition that Thomas Hancock, Rev. Hancock’s second son (b. 1703) and a wealthy Boston merchant, built the house for his father at the same time that he was building his own mansion on Beacon Hill cannot be verified in the documentary record. However, the supposition is highly likely under the circumstances. The house was perhaps the most sophisticated dwelling in Lexington at the time and was embellished with English wallpapers to which Thomas Hancock as a leading wallpaper dealer in Boston of the 1730s would have had easy access.

In 1742, after the death of Ebenezer Hancock, Thomas Hancock acquired the property in an unrecorded deed. In 1760 after the death of Rev. Hancock’s widow, Thomas sold the 50-acre property containing a “mansion house, barn and edifices thereon” to Rev. Jonas Clarke. Room references in the Rev. Clarke’s diary indicate that the layout of the house during his lifetime was the same as it is today.

After the death of Rev. Clarke in 1805 his unmarried daughters lived on at the Hancock-Clarke House until their deaths in 1843 and 1844. The division of Rev. Clarke’s real estate in 1823 provides a remarkably complete description of the property and indicates that by then a pumphouse, a chaise house and a mystery building 10 feet by 20 feet in size had been added north of the ell.

The property changed hands three times before the Lexington Historical Society acquired the building in 1896. During that time the house remained as it had been in the eighteenth century, except for the replacement of the kitchen fireplace, the painting of the keeping room and the replacement of the windows with 6/6 sash. In the restoration of 1897 the Historical Society installed the current 12/16 sash windows and undertook certain repairs.

The extensive examination of the house by the architect, architectural historian and the structural engineer revealed more than just the well-preserved woodwork in a house that is a largely unchanged and significant example of early Georgian design. The examination also revealed the unexpectedly forward looking structural detail of the use of deep joists that made possible the concealing of the ceiling beams in three rooms. This is one of the two earliest examples known in New England of a practice that had been in use in England since the late sixteenth century.

10 Middlesex County Registry of Probate, Docket # 4539.
The differing second floor and roof heights in the two parts of the building led to the use of some makeshift means of joining them that plague the house to this day. The inadequate framing and joinery at the south end of the ell has caused the ell to spread sideways and the two parts of the house to separate. For whatever reason, no tie beam that would have formed a truss with the rafters and prevented the sideways spread was placed in the southernmost bent of the ell. The west plate of the ell is mortised into a stud in the north wall of the parlor. Presumably the east plate was once joined to the north corner post of the front part of the house, but that connection no longer exists. As a result, above the first floor the two parts of the house are joined only by several hand-wrought spikes driven from the front part of the house into the ell and by whatever joining the finish materials provide.

The sideways spreading of the ell structure, apparently, began before the building was moved in 1896. The work undertaken in conjunction with the return of the building to its original site in 1974 did not adequately address the problem. Consequently, the security of the ell structure is a primary objective of the proposed repairs to the building.

The proposed reinforcement of the ell includes:

- Adding a stable tension member to the rafters to prevent further spreading.
- Removing remedial supports that add stress to the roof frame.
- Adding vertical support to both the south end roof frame and second floor structure of the ell.
- Reinforcing existing undersized roof framing members.
- Establishing continuous structure at the east side top plate.
- Repair of several deteriorated wood timber connections.
- Reinforcement of several areas of inadequate floor framing.
- Investigation and reinforcement of the roof and wall structure of the four dormers.

Additional structural repair measures recommended are:

- Structural repair of the deteriorated northeast corner post of the gable structure.
- Additional support from the 20c steel frame to the first floor timber frame.

Other recommended repairs are:

- Removal of cement composite shingles, making sheathing repairs, and re-shingling all roofs.
- Repair, cleaning, or selective replacement of
  - Sheathing, cladding, flashings and trim.
  - Wood gutters of the gabled part.
  - Brick chimneys at the gambrel-roofed and gabled parts.
  - Windows, doors, and hardware.
  - Interior finishes and fabric.
  - Replication of historic wallpaper and paint finishes.
  - Electrical wiring, fixtures and controls.
  - HVAC system.
III. SIGNIFICANCE

A. Historical Significance

The historical significance of the Hancock-Clarke House rests first and foremost upon its association with the events surrounding the beginning of the American Revolution when the Lexington Minutemen and the British troops confronted each other on the Lexington Green on the fateful day of April 19, 1775. Rev. Jonas Clarke was at his house, just a short distance from the Green. Rev. Clarke was a leading patriot minister, well known and respected by the leaders of the Revolutionary cause. With an interest in the process of “human government” grounded in his religion, and with his strong support of justice for the colonies, Jonas Clarke shaped Lexington’s response to the unjust measures meted out by the Crown. For example, three days before the Boston Tea party, he persuaded his parishioners to burn their tea on the Lexington Green in protest to the Stamp Act. The resolutions he wrote for Lexington and his published writings on behalf of Liberty were described by Edward Everett as having “few equals and no superiors.” The Hancock-Clarke is one of only a handful of houses associated with leading patriots to survive, and surely it is the least changed architecturally of any of them.

Because of Rev. Clarke’s leadership the Hancock-Clarke House was the site of frequent consultations among patriots. John Hancock, grandson of the former owner of the Hancock-Clarke House, and Samuel Adams sought the safety of Rev. Clarke’s house when they left Boston on April 7 and 10 respectively, after attending the Provincial Congress in Concord. It was to the Hancock-Clarke House, by then guarded by eight Lexington Minutemen, that Paul Revere and William Dawes came to warn Adams and Hancock that the troops were approaching and that arrest might be imminent. It was here that the men conferred in the hours after midnight before Hancock and Adams departed for a new safe location.

Rev. Clarke’s continued involvement in the Revolutionary cause and in the establishment of a new government in Massachusetts earned him the honor of delivering the Election sermon to the legislature elected in 1781 under the new constitution. Rev. Clarke was also a leader in the effort to commemorate the Battle of Lexington.

After Rev. Clarke’s death in 1805, his two spinster daughters maintained the house much as it had been during their father’s lifetime until their deaths in 1843 and 1844. The subsequent veneration of the house, and especially of the parlor bedroom where Adams and Hancock had stayed, made the house an icon of the American Revolution and the subject of many published

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11 Writings about Rev. Jonas Clarke indicate that he was, like the founding fathers, deeply interested in political theory, or as he apparently put it “human government.” See Edwin B. Worthen, Jr. “Jonas Clarke of Lexington: An Account of his Life and Service to the Town,” p. 43 and Rev. Jonas Clarke, Election Sermon Delivered to the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1781. LHS Archives.


13 Frederick C. Detwiller, personal communication, April 11, 2007.
descriptions. In 1875 during Lexington’s Centennial celebration the building was draped with flags; thousands of people trooped through the interior.¹⁴

An area of significance second only to the house’s role in the Revolutionary period, was the saving of the house in 1896 by the Lexington Historical Society when the owner planned to demolish it. The actions of the Lexington Historical Society, founded in 1886, were especially important because they were so early in the preservation movement. The Hancock-Clarke House was one of the first three historic buildings in New England to be acquired by a local group and saved to become a house museum, preceded only by the house of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumsford in Woburn in 1877, and by the Concord Antiquarian Society’s purchase of the Reuben Brown House in 1887.¹⁵

⁵ Lexington Historical Society Records, vol. 1, October 11, 1904, p. 293.

Figure 6. Stereoscopic view of the Hancock-Clarke House in 1975. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
At a time when Americans were looking back to their Colonial heritage and trying to instill the values of the founding fathers in the new immigrant populations, the Lexington Historical Society had a clear vision of the importance of saving the house. In tribute to Rev. Staples, whose leadership ensured that the house would be saved, it was stated that:

He built a new shrine for the eager pilgrim, a new altar whereon thousands who make this pilgrimage may pledge themselves to the service of a genuine patriotism.16

The house became the repository of early relics donated to the Lexington Historical Society by townspeople and others. Because the appearance of the rooms was well documented in photographs taken in the early 20th century and several versions of early tour notes are available, we now have a rich record of the presentation of history and interpretive practices in an early house museum.

Figure 7. Room 205 with displays from the early 20th century.
Burr Church, Photographer, 1934

The annual number of visitors, which approached 2,000 in the first decade, peaked at 47,000 in 1925, the year of the Sesquicentennial. By the 1960s, over a million people had visited the house.
The role of women in the initial saving of the Hancock-Clarke House and throughout its 111-year stewardship by the Lexington Historical Society is a further area of significance associated with the house, reflecting the larger context of Historic Preservation in which often it was the women who provided the first line of defense in saving historic buildings. In the case of the Hancock-Clarke House, though the house was initially saved by Rev. Staples, the money to pay for the house and its restoration was raised in large part by fifteen ladies who canvassed the residents of Lexington for donations.

The Hancock-Clarke House is noteworthy as the home of two influential religious leaders, the Rev. Clarke, and his predecessor, Rev. John Hancock, whose pastorates spanned the eighteenth century, each serving for fifty years or more, and whose leadership shaped the character of the Town of Lexington in the eighteenth century and beyond.

Finally, the house is significant as a resource for understanding the lives of the families, servants and even slaves who inhabited it. While information about the Hancock family has to be gleaned from disparate sources, the Rev. Clarke left a series of diaries (although some years are missing), which provide a window for understanding the operations of the household and the farm on the fifty-acre property between 1766 and 1805.
III. SIGNIFICANCE

B. Architectural Significance

The Hancock-Clarke is a significant example of the Georgian architecture that swept into New England in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Because the building is largely unchanged, it preserves important character-defining features from the time of the original construction in 1737-1738. As such, the house is an important resource for understanding the architecture of the Georgian period and the meanings associated with it.

In rural farming communities, such as Lexington, the minister was usually the most important individual, and his house, reflecting that status, was often the largest and finest in town. There is little reason to doubt that Rev. Hancock’s house was the finest and most sophisticated in Lexington in its rendering of the new architectural style at the time that it was built.

The involvement, ascribed by tradition, of Thomas Hancock, Rev. Hancock’s son and a wealthy Boston merchant, in the construction of his father’s house, may have given Rev. Hancock access to design ideas and building practices as yet unfamiliar to local craftsmen. Thomas Hancock was building his own celebrated mansion on Beacon Hill, possibly with the help of an English architect, in the same years that the Hancock-Clarke House was being built. Thomas’s awareness of the new style through his own experience may have enabled him to help his father select craftsmen who could fashion the new Georgian elements. The exceedingly early use of deep joists in three of the four front rooms to conceal ceiling beams, preceded by only one known other example in New England, the Bryant-Cushing House in Norwell, Massachusetts, built c. 1700 to 1720, may be another result of Thomas’s influence.

The construction of the Hancock-Clarke House and other comparable houses of the 1730s, such as the Durant Kendrick House in Newton, reflects the gradual dissemination of the new Georgian architecture to rural areas through men with urban connections. Like some other early Georgian houses, the Hancock-Clarke House, despite its forward looking features, retains certain elements from the previous post medieval period. These include the central chimney, the asymmetrical plan, the uncased beams in a few places and the recessed chimneypieces. This reluctance to make a complete transition to the new style was often associated with rural areas.

The “simple elegance”\textsuperscript{18} of the front part of the Hancock-Clarke house is revealed on the exterior in the doorway with pilasters and a flat entablature, the vertically aligned windows and their trim, and molded cornice. On the interior of the front part of the house the carefully-crafted woodwork is a cohesive statement of early Georgian design, made more striking by the absence of any finish treatment except a translucent coating applied in 1897. Features include paneled fireplace walls in the ground floor rooms, a fully elaborated staircase, and paneled doors with molded architraves, molded window trim and paneled shutters throughout the house. The interior of the ell with its extensive use of feather-edged boarding, is an excellent example of the


\textsuperscript{18} Phrase used by Abbott Cummings in a letter to Susan Bennett, April 7, 2007.
treatment of utilitarian or secondary spaces in a Georgian house in which only the fireplace and its trim was altered.

The house also represents the growing emphasis on privacy and specialized room function in the Georgian period. The lobby entry allowed separate access to each room in the front part of the house. That part of the house was the location of the more formal social spaces, and the decoration of those rooms reflected their relative importance. The ell, which included the functional spaces, was suitably modest by comparison. The ell includes a particularly well-preserved eighteenth century kitchen in which only the fireplace and its trim have been altered.

The unique history of the Hancock-Clarke House has made available to us a rare early example of a nearly intact building of the 1730s. Revered almost from the start for its role in the events of April 19, 1775 and as the home of Lexington’s influential patriot minister, Rev. Jonas Clarke, the building’s status as an icon of the American Revolution only grew in subsequent years. Preserved first by Clarke’s daughters and then, apparently, by its growing fame, the house remained intact until it was saved from destruction by Lexington Historical Society in 1896. The

Figure 8. Hancock-Adams Bedroom doorway and pilaster detail.
house is a good example of how one event can influence the subsequent history of a building. Like most early house museums preserved for their historical associations, the house survived to become a subject of interest also for its architecture and the reflection in the architecture of the social practices of the period.

Figure 9. Keeping Room: Detail of decorative trim on beam cases and fireplace wall.
IV. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

A. Ownership and Relocation History; Important Dates in the Lives of Early Owners

1693 Edward Pelham, of Newport, sells his Pelham Farm in Cambridge Farms in 3 large parcels to Rev. Joseph Estabrook, John Poulter and Benjamin Muzzey. Muzzey’s portion of 206 acres includes the future site of the Hancock-Clarke House.

1698 John Hancock invited to become minister in Lexington, then Cambridge Farms.

1699 John Hancock purchases 25 acres of land including the site of the present house from Benjamin Muzzey.

1700 John Hancock ordained.

1700 Rev. Hancock marries Elizabeth Clark of Chelmsford.

1713 Cambridge Farms separates from Cambridge to become Lexington.

1733 Ebenezer Hancock joins his father as the second minister of the Lexington church.

1734 Rev. Hancock deeds his property to his son, Ebenezer, in exchange for life tenancy by Rev. Hancock and his wife.

1740 Rev. Ebenezer Hancock dies.

1742 Thomas Hancock, Rev. Hancock’s second son, acquires the property in exchange for agreeing to pay his three siblings the value one quarter of their father’s estate upon his death.

1752 Rev. Hancock dies.

1755 Rev. Jonas Clarke invited to succeed Rev. Hancock.

1757 Rev. Clarke marries Lucy Bowes of Bedford.

1760 Thomas Hancock sells the property to Rev. Jonas Clarke.

1789 Mrs. Clarke dies.

1805 Rev. Jonas Clarke dies.

1844 Elizabeth Clarke, Rev. Clarke’s daughter and last member of the Clarke family to live in the house, dies.
1846  Property sold to William Chandler.
1846  Property sold to Joseph Eaton.
1875  Property sold to Henry B. Brigham.
1896  Lexington Historical Society purchases the house and moves it across Hancock Street.
1963  Original house site bequeathed to the Lexington Historical Society.
1964-1965 Roland Robbins does archaeology at the original site of the Hancock-Clarke House to determine the original location of the house in preparation for moving it back across the street.
1974  House moved back to its original location.
IV. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

B. History of Property Occupation and Use

Four events stand out as particularly important in the history of the Hancock-Clarke House. These events, 1) the happenings on the night of April 18, 1775, 2) The first viewing of the house by thousands of visitors on April 19, 1875, 3) the saving and moving of the house in 1896, and 4) the return of the house to the original site in 1974 are indicated in bold in the following chronology

1699-1760: The Hancock Family

John Hancock was born in 1671 in the part of Cambridge that is now Newton. He graduated from Harvard College in 1689. In the next nine years, he taught school in various towns and prepared for the ministry. In 1697 he was invited to preach in Lexington after the death of Rev. Benjamin Estabrook. In November of 1698, he was accepted as Lexington’s settled minister and ordained. A year later he bought 25 acres of land of which the current Hancock-Clarke House property is a part. By 1701, he had built a house on the land; a deed conveying a neighboring property to him mentions the property’s proximity to Rev. Hancock’s dwelling.¹⁹

In 1700 Rev. Hancock married Elizabeth Clark, daughter of the minister in Chelmsford. Their children were:

- John, (1702-1744), graduated from Harvard College, served as minister in Braintree.
- Thomas (1703-1764), apprenticed to a bookbinder in Boston at age 14, and became a wealthy merchant and ship owner.
- Ebenezer. (1710-1740), graduated from Harvard College in 1728, settled as second minister in Lexington in 1734 to assist his father.
- Lucy (b. 1713), married Rev. Nicholas Bowes of Bedford.

Town records refer from time to time to Rev. Hancock’s salary and his use of the Ministerial Land for wood. In 1728, the town gave Rev. Hancock £85 to purchase a slave.²⁰ In 1734, Rev. Hancock’s third son, Ebenezer joined his father as a second settled minister in Lexington. After Ebenezer’s death in 1740, Rev. John Hancock continued as minister until his death in 1752.

One resource, not recently examined, that sheds light on Rev. Hancock’s character is his Common Place Book. Rev. Carlton Staples described its contents thus:

Parson Hancock was a diligent student, a man of wide and varied information, a careful reader of Harvard College Library, as his notes and comments abundantly prove, preserved in his Common Place Book. This is a huge mass of extracts and reflections in his handwriting, beginning when a college student and extending to near the close of his life. They form an octavo volume of nearly 500 closely written pages, filled to the last

²⁰ At the time of Rev. Hancock’s death, he owned two slaves.
line with few exceptions. It contains information upon a multitude of subjects gleaned from the reading and experience of a long life. It is a remarkable production, opening the mind of the man and revealing his habits and character more fully than anything besides. Here are Science, Philosophy, theology, Medicine, the phenomena of nature, and of animal life, a thousand practical matters relating to the farm, the household, the church and the state, interspersed with scraps of history, biography, the sayings of great men, stories and pungent epigrams all properly and systematically arranged under the proper headings.21

In addition to his ministerial duties, Rev. John Hancock, known for his leadership of the clergy in the area as “Bishop,” settled disputes among parishioners, enlarged his homestead to fifty acres, worked those acres as a farm, and purchased additional real estate as an investment. Little is known about his family’s life in Lexington.

1760-1846: The Clarke Family

In 1755, Rev. Clarke was born in 1730 and grew up in Newton. He graduated from Harvard College in 1752 and returned to study for a master’s degree in 1754. Like his predecessor, Rev. Clarke taught school and prepared for the ministry until he was invited to preach in Lexington in 1755. He was ordained in November of that year. Rev. Clarke boarded with Rev. Hancock’s widow and in 1757 married Lucy Bowes, Madame Hancock’s granddaughter, who also lived at the Hancock-Clarke House. Lucy was daughter of Rev. Nicholas Bowes and his wife, Lucy Hancock. After Madame Hancock died in 1760, Rev. Jonas Clarke bought the property from Thomas Hancock. There he and his wife raised their family and lived until their deaths, Mrs. Clarke in 1789 and Rev. Clarke in 1805.

The Clarke’s children were;
Thomas, (b. 1758) died as an infant.
Thomas (1759-1832) became town Clerk and then Clerk of the Common Council in Boston.
Jonas (b. 1760) became collector of the port and judge of probate in the county of York, Maine.
Mary (b. 1762) married Rev. Henry Ware, who became Hollis professor of Divinity at Harvard University.
Elizabeth (b. 1763, d. 1844, some records say 1843), unmarried, lived in the Hancock-Clarke House until her death.
William (1764-1822) pursued business in Boston and Amsterdam.
Peter, (b. 1765) was a merchant in Berwick, Maine.
Lucy (b. 1767) married Rev. Thaddeus Fiske of West Cambridge.
Lydia (b. 1768) married Rev. Benjamin Green of Medway.
Martha (b. 1770) married Rev. William Harris of Salem.
Sarah (1774-1843) unmarried, lived in the Hancock-Clarke House until her death in 1843.

Isaac Bowen (1779-1800) pursued business in Boston.
Henry (b. 1780) pursued business in Boston and Kennebunk, Maine.

Rev. Jonas Clarke’s role in the community and in the revolutionary cause was the chief reason that Lexington became “the small town placed in destiny’s path.” Rev. Clarke was an important patriot minister, who galvanized Lexington in its response to the events leading up to the Revolution and inspired other clergy and leaders in the patriot cause alike. Because of his role, the Hancock-Clarke House became a rallying point for patriot leaders, especially after the Provincial Congress began to meet in Concord. The fact that Samuel Adams and John Hancock were staying with Rev. Clarke and were warned by Paul Revere and William Dawes of the impending arrival of the regulars on the night of April 18, 1775 turned his house into an emblem of patriotism that continues to this day.

Rev. Clarke “state papers” written on behalf of Lexington to instruct its representatives in the town’s wishes were eloquent and well respected. Rev. Clarke led Lexington’s war effort by example, donating money for the cause and firewood for the people of Boston during the British occupation. Rev. Clarke also led the effort to commemorate the Battle of Lexington. In 1799, when the bodies of the minutemen who had fallen on April 19, 1775 were reburied on the Lexington Green, he wrote the inscription on the memorial tablet.

Apart from his ministerial and community duties Rev. Clarke had a rich family life and participated actively in the farming of his property. He welcomed an almost continuous stream of family, friends, and colleagues, who visited his house. The occasional references to his family in his diary make it clear that he was deeply attached to them. A number of family letters survive in the Lexington Historical Society Archives that amplify the evidence of his connection to a wide kinship.

Evaluation of the two ministers and their impact on Lexington

The pastorates of Rev. John Hancock and Rev. Jonas Clarke, which spanned the eighteenth century, had a significant impact on the town in their time and thereafter. If facts regarding the family life of the two ministers are lacking, their public roles and personalities were a frequent subject of historians, especially in the years in the late nineteenth century when the country was finding new meaning in its colonial past. Here are a few excerpts from writings that describe these two giants.

Mr. Hancock and Mr. Clarke were both distinguished in their profession, and each of them labored in the vineyard of their Lord for half a century with eminent success, and each died greatly lamented by the people of the place. . . . No two clergymen out of Boston filled a larger space in the public mind, in their respective generations. . . . they were eminently successful in their calling.

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22 Edwin B. Worthen, Jr.
In theology, their sentiments were very similar. . . .

Though remarkable for their social qualities, in their intercourse with their fellow men, Mr. Hancock had more pleasantry and Mr. Clarke more dignity; and while the former would more frequently unbend himself and indulge in playful wit or humor, the latter would never put off the character of the clergyman.

. . . of intellectual power, the preference must be given to Mr. Clarke. If Mr. Hancock’s vision was more microscopic, Mr. Clarke’s extended over a broader field. . . . Mr. Hancock could meet the wants of the present; Mr. Clarke could anticipate those of the future.24

Clarke . . . possessed some of the versatility and range of interests that characterized such contemporaries as Jefferson and Franklin. . . . It became clear, within a few years of his settlement at Lexington, that he would be the greatest single influence on the town’s history.25

Occupancy by Elizabeth and Sarah Clarke

The two unmarried daughters, separated in age by eleven years, lived on in the Hancock-Clarke House until their deaths. A few surviving letters indicate that they lived in relative poverty and were probably subsidized by family and friends. They also took in boarders after the Normal School opened at the beginning of Hancock Street in 1839. They were apparently assiduous in maintaining the house, especially the Hancock-Adams Bedroom as it had been in 1775. In 1835, Harriet Martineau, an Englishwoman who wrote about her travels in the U.S., visited them, as Sarah Chandler remembered, but seems not to have recorded her visit.

One relative wrote that Elizabeth was stern and reclusive, perhaps because of the childhood accident that disfigured her face, while Sarah, who was vivacious and would have enjoyed society, chose to stay with her older sister.26

1846-1875 The Eaton ownership

Joseph Eaton, who lived in the house from 1846 to 1975, had in 1835 married Margaret Chandler a member of a family that had long been prominent in Lexington. It was her niece, Sarah Chandler who provided the most complete reminiscences of the house in the first half of the nineteenth century, being friendly with the Clarke sisters and then living with the Eatons where her grandmother, Mrs. Eaton’s mother, also lived.

24 Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), 330-331. This history of Lexington was revised and continued from Hudson’s publication of 1868. Though unattributed to him, the chapter on the reverends Hancock and Clarke quotes verbatim from earlier works by Rev. Carlton Staples.


26 Reference to Elizabeth’s disfigurement is found in Rev. Carlton A. Staples, “Two Old-Time Ministers of Lexington,” n.d. p. 12. LHS Archives. See also Lucy Ware Allen, Ms. in the LHS Archives.
The Eatons fostered the fame of the house by admitting a number of visitors who wrote descriptions of the house. A second important event in the history of the building was the Eatons opening the house on April 19, 1875. Thousands of people visited the house that day. The town paid for draping the house with bunting (see Figure 6), and reimbursed the Eatons for use of the house.27

The Hancock-Clarke House and its contents were sold at auction in July of 1875.

1875-1896 the Brigham ownership

Henry B. Brigham, who lived with his wife and daughter on the property adjacent to the Hancock-Clarke House to the north, bought the house from Mr. Eaton. The house was rented out in the beginning. At some point, probably after the death of Mr. Brigham in 1887, the house fell into disrepair and was not rented. In the mid 1890s people became aware that Mr. Brigham’s widow considered the house an eyesore and wanted to tear it down.

1896 to the present: Lexington Historical Society ownership

In 1896, after some delicate negotiations, Rev. Carlton Staples, pastor of the First Parish Church and a founder of the Lexington Historical Society in 1886, persuaded Mrs. Brigham to sell the building to him with the promise that it would be moved from the property in sixty days. As described more completely in the Building History of this report, the Historical Society mounted a campaign to raise the money to reimburse Rev. Staples, purchase a lot across Hancock Street, move the house to the new lot and restore it. The move constituted a third significant event in the history of the property. Although buildings were moved all the time in New England from the earliest days, this is one of the earliest for which the purpose was to save an important historic house.

The Historical Society’s, now in the 111th year of its stewardship of the property has preserved the house and interpreted it as a house museum to visitors from all over the world. The number of people who have visited exceeded one million by 1961. Over the years the objects displayed in the house have changed and there have been cosmetic refurbishings, but the physical fabric has only been changed when repairs necessitated.28

A fourth significant event in the history of the building was the return of the house to its original site in 1974. The land on which the Hancock-Clarke House sat originally was donated to the Historical Society in 1963 by Mrs. Brigham’s granddaughter. After archaeological excavations in 1964-1965 identified the precise location of the house on that site, and preparations for the return were made, the building was moved back across the street; the event that was well attended (see Figure 1). The cellar houses a more commodious archive and curatorial storage than before, and for the first time there was an adequate reception area in the addition built to the north of the ell.

In 2005, the Lexington Historical Society began a campaign to again refurbish the house and enlarge the reception area to accommodate new programs and to make the building handicapped accessible.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

A. Original Construction

1. The Gabled Part of the House
The south part of the Hancock-Clarke House, built in 1737-1738, is a five-bay-wide, one-room deep, two-and-one-half story house with central chimney and lobby entry. The plan is asymmetrical, the west rooms being three feet wider than the east rooms. The building faces south at an angle to Hancock Street where it has stood since it was returned to its original site in 1974.

While the overall design of the exterior of this part of the house, with its vertical proportions, its regular fenestration, and features of decorative trim, is in keeping with early Georgian architecture, it is difficult to be certain how much original fabric has survived on the exterior. The building was in disrepair when it was saved in 1897. A certain amount of restoration work was known to have taken place in 1897 in order to meet the objective stated in the local newspaper “to maintain the characteristics of other days so that [the house] shall be typical of a New England home during the days of the Revolution.” The work that was done, however, was not described. Exterior photographs from before 1896 indicate that all major elements of the decoration of the exterior were present including the doorway, window heads, cornice moldings, corner boards and projecting water table. Whether individual features, such as moldings, were replaced is unknown and the “before” photos are not detailed enough to determine this. It is suspected that, since funds were limited in 1897, all fabric that could be saved was saved rather than replaced. Further research, such as paint analysis of exterior elements, would be needed to identify original exterior features.

The doorway with its paneled pilasters, flat entablature embellished with a dentil course and four transom lights over the door, almost certainly dates from the original construction. It is typical of doorways surviving from the period or illustrated in architecture books of the time. Although the ceiling heights of ninety-eight inches on the first floor are like those of other upscale houses of the time, the doorway is given greater emphasis in the design because the entablature extends above the first floor ceiling height.

Figure 10. Detail of entablature over doorway, south façade.
The window openings have not been changed in location or size, as they are integral to the surviving original window trim on the interiors. The windows themselves have been changed at least twice. The original windows probably had the nine over nine lights show in the c. 1840 painting (see cover), whereas the present windows installed in 1897 have twelve over sixteen lights. Components of the exterior window trim have likely been replaced over time. This observation is based partly on the fact that there is different trim on different facades. Similarly, cornice moldings now have short returns on the east side of the building, while early photographs show no returns.

The exterior walls are clapboarded. In some areas eighteenth or early nineteenth century clapboards, identified by their skived ends, survive. In the earliest photographs the roof is covered with wooden shingles and the chimney, which exits the roof just north of the ridge, has a profile similar to the current one.

Regarding the original cellar under a part of the house, archaeologist Roland Robbins described the cellar as being of dry laid rubble stonework, typical of the house’s period of construction. The current granite facing of the house’s foundation was installed after the house was returned to the original site in 1974.

On the interior, the four rooms in the south part of the house, the keeping room and parlor on the first floor and the chambers above, are virtually unchanged from their original appearance. No evidence suggests that the woodwork in these rooms was ever altered. The fortunate circumstance that the house was revered for its revolutionary associations and then preserved by the subsequent poverty of the family has meant that the building escaped almost totally the normal course of updating over time to conform to contemporary tastes to which most houses are subjected.

The parlor (Room 111) has a fully paneled fireplace wall embellished with pilasters and a paneled chimneybreast set in a twelve-inch recess. In houses of the period, the hierarchy of decorative treatment among the rooms was used as a code to instruct those admitted to the house as to their place in the social structure. It is no surprise that Samuel Adams and John Hancock were housed in the best and largest room in the house.

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Figure 12. Fireplace wall in the Hancock-Adams Bedroom in 1934. Burr Church, Photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
The stair hall, another focus of decorative display, includes a staircase that features all the expected elements of Georgian design of a sort frequently illustrated in architectural books of the period.

Room 108, which Jonas Clarke called the keeping room, is the only room in the front part of the house where ceiling beams, enclosed in beaded cases, are articulated below the ceiling. Cornice moldings along all of the beam cases add a further note of embellishment. The reason why the room received a less forward looking treatment than the parlor and the rooms upstairs where ceiling beams are hidden, probably relates to the fact that the keeping room was the less formal downstairs room. The fireplace wall in the keeping room is fully paneled, though less elaborately decorated than the fireplace wall in the parlor.

In the chambers, the fireplace walls, like the outer walls, are plastered. The best chamber over the parlor received a rare example of a paneled chimneybreast set completely within a bolection-molded architrave. In the southeast chamber, the fireplace trim is even simpler, with just a bolection molding set around the firebox in a plastered recess. Throughout the front part of the house, paneled doors with molded architraves and paneled shutters, some of which are replacements from 1897, further define the period character of the house.

The original framing of the south part of the house combines oak and pine timbers. The posts, deep joists and some purlins are oak, while the rafters, summer beams and tie beams are softwood. The combination of the use of softwood and hardwood is expected in the early eighteenth century when oak supplies were diminishing.

2. The Ell

There is some evidence to suggest that the ell was built to adjoin a previously existing building on cellar hole 6-F3 excavated in 1965. The evidence includes 1) the location of the west wall, which seems arbitrary unless it was to abut another structure, and 2) the fact that there is no brick nogging in the west wall of the ell, though nogging is present in the north and east walls.

Like the south part of the house, the ell also retains its original design and form. Because of its service functions, the ell is very different in appearance than the south part. Ceiling heights are much lower and the second floor is 13 1/2 inches below that of the south part of the house. Altogether, the ell was a more modest structure, cheaper to build. The trim on the exterior of the ell is plain, and was probably only replaced as needed by the parsimonious owners. The clapboarded exterior walls are pierced by irregularly placed windows on the first floor. Four dormers, two on each lower slope of the gambrel roof, are apparently in their original locations.

The kitchen in the ell incorporates horizontal feather-edged paneling of the sort most frequently seen in secondary or service spaces in Georgian houses. This stands in sharp contrast to the treatment of the rooms in the south part of the house. However, as one expert noted, “Even after the use of plaster in the front rooms of the house became the rule, wainscot was still used for finishing the walls of the rear rooms, especially the kitchen and the less important rooms of the second floor.”

One unusual feature of the kitchen is that the horizontal paneling runs completely behind the staircase. Such paneling is not generally found next to stairs to the cellar. However, the cellar stairs are in their original position as no pockets for joists exist in the cellar beam where the stairs intruded. The kitchen preserves a fine eighteenth century dresser, painted white in 1794 that was singled out for mention by Mascarene in his poem about the house of that year.32

The north end of the kitchen saw major changes when the fireplace was rebuilt on a smaller scale in the mid-nineteenth century. Before that, the fireplace apparently filled the space behind the chimney girt and west of the door to the sheds north of the house. Sarah Chandler, born in 1819, who knew the house from her childhood describe the fireplace thus: “Opposite the sitting room door was a the fireplace with its ample chimney corners and two ovens, a large one on one side and a small one on the other side. There was a high mantel over the fireplace.”33 Other descriptions of the fireplace before it was made smaller indicate that the bulge of one of the ovens projected “in a rather bulky fashion” into the shed on the other side of the chimney.34

33 Sarah Chandler, Remembrances of the Hancock-Clarke House, 1897. LHS Archives.
34 Mt. Auburn Memorial, March 14, 1860.
During repairs in 1975 evidence, in the form of a mortise in the north sill of the ell, indicated that the cellar beam under the partition between the kitchen and the study had once extended to the north wall of the ell.35 This suggested that there might have been no fireplace in the study originally. The study, narrower than the kitchen, and the upstairs rooms in the ell are also modestly finished; there are plaster walls in the study and feather-edged paneling on the walls upstairs.

With the exception of the pine summer beam, the ell is constructed with oak timbers. The cellar ceiling in the ell has at least one reused timber. In the cellar, the joists of the ell are set in cogs in the north side of the north sill of the south part of the house, strongly suggesting that despite the odd joining of the two parts of the house above, they were built as part of the same building campaign in 1737-1738.

The unusual framing at the junction with the south part of the house includes rafters for the gambrel roof but no tie beam. The rafters are bird-mouthed over the east and west plates of the ell. The east plate is not now attached by a mortise to the corner post of the south part of the house; the west plate is attached to an extra large stud that was inserted in the rear wall of Room 111 about one foot west of the chimney post.36

There is some evidence that the decision to build the ell might have occurred after construction of the south part of the house had begun. Reasons for this supposition are: 1) the fact that the

36 Ibid.
north wall of the gabled part is filled with brick nogging, that was almost always reserved for exterior walls, and 2) the fact that the north wall of the gabled part has horizontal sheathing nailed to the north side of the studs’ again an unexpected finding for an interior wall.

The posts, some girts and rafters are oak. The summer beam is pine, and is unusual in that although it spans the house from east to west, it is cut back by approximately three inches to allow greater headroom in the study. The framing at the outer walls is undecorated on the first floor; the summer beam and the chimney girt have a narrow bead at the edge. This beaded decoration of the beams is consistent with the construction date of 1737-1738. In a more expensive construction of the period, however, the beams would have been covered with cases. An unusual feature of the ell is the plank partition, covered with plaster on both sides that divides the kitchen from the study. The planks are up to ten inches wide and one-and-one-half inches thick. They span from floor to ceiling. Dendrochronology results indicate that the planks date from the original construction.

A second unusual feature of the ell is the use of horizontal sheathing boards on the north side of the studs of the gabled part of the house to support the first floor ceiling joists of the ell, a function that would normally have been supplied by a tie beam if there were one. These horizontal boards at the south wall of the ell made it necessary the use of diagonal lath when the study was plastered. Using diagonal lath as opposed to horizontal lath prevents the plaster from cracking when the sheathing expands.
Figure 15. Diagonal lath attached to sheathing at the south end of the study (Room 106). Note also the foot of the birdmouthed rafter that straddles the side and top of the west plate of the ell. Normally the rafter would have been mortised into a tie beam, but no tie beam was included in the ell’s frame. Anne Grady, Photographer. 1975.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

B. Design Derivation

The Hancock-Clarke is an early example of the Georgian architecture that came to New England in the eighteenth century. Based ultimately on the architecture of the Renaissance as it evolved in England during the reigns of George I and George II (hence the name), Georgian architecture eclipsed the previous post medieval architecture in Old and New England. Characterized by the use of classical orders and other design motifs that can be traced back to Antiquity, by symmetry and concealed structure, the new architecture also signaled a change to more specialized room use and a new emphasis on privacy. These new design ideals found their way into New England though British architectural books or through newly arrived craftsmen schooled in English usages. Local carpenters might copy directly from books or from the work of other craftsmen.

Though the design of the woodwork of the Hancock-Clarke House, with the possible exception of the front doorway, is too simple to have been copied directly from an architectural book, design motifs, such as pilasters and their plinth bases, staircase trim, cornice moldings, etc. were frequently illustrated in books of the period.

Whether Thomas Hancock played a role in determining the design of his father’s house is unknown, but likely. Thomas Hancock, who was building his mansion on Beacon Hill at the same time as Rev. Hancock’s house was being built, had access to the latest design and construction practices, and possibly also to an English architect. It was perhaps Thomas who promoted the use of deep joists to conceal the ceiling beams in the Hancock-Clarke House. Such joists were used in England from the sixteenth century on, but here, as far as is known, their use was exceedingly rare before the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

The fact that the Hancock-Clarke House retains some holdover features from the previous architectural period, notably the asymmetrical plan, the central chimney, and the recessed chimneypieces, is not surprising given how early in the Georgian period the building was constructed. New Englanders, even in the face of the great appeal of Georgian architecture, were sometimes reluctant to give up old forms.

V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

C. Building History: Repairs, Relocations and Additions

1737-1767
Once the Hancock-Clarke House was constructed in 1737-1738, there appear to have been no major changes to the building itself, other than the rebuilding of the kitchen chimney. What followed in the next 270 years were the kinds of maintenance and repairs necessary to maintain a weather-tight and safe building, and occasionally to update finishes. When the Lexington Historical Society acquired the building in 1896, the first task was to address the deterioration of the building caused by the previous owner’s neglect. Since then the effort has been to maintain it as well as possible despite the astonishing number of visitors who passed through its doors.

The major sources of information about the repair history, other than examination of the building itself, are the diaries of Rev. Jonas Clarke, occasional reminiscences about the building in the nineteenth century, and the records of the Lexington Historical Society. These sources, however, surely present only a partial picture of the work that has been done on the building.

1767-1805
There is no record of what, if any, work might have been done on the house until 1767 when entries regarding the house first appear in Jonas Clarke’s surviving diaries. In Rev. Clarke’s diaries, a single small page is devoted to each month. Entries, mostly a single line per day, refer to the comings and goings of visitors and family members, work on outbuildings and fences, operations of the farm in which Rev. Clarke played an active role, and in a few instances to work on the house itself. The references to house repairs and renewal of finishes are listed below. These entries are included because, even though incomplete, they represent the kinds of repairs necessary to maintain a building in the second half of the eighteenth century, and because it is rare to have even this much information about the care of a building of the period.38

Rev. Clarke’s account book also survives.39 While a number of accounts indicate work on buildings, only one can be linked with certainty to the Clarke homestead because Rev. Clarke was also overseeing repairs to the house in Bedford known today as the Domine Manse, where his wife’s three younger sisters lived after the death of their father, Rev. Nicholas Bowes.

For reference, the list below gives the name of rooms to which Rev. Clarke refers in his diaries and the room numbers assigned to them in the current project. The list makes it clear that the house was divided during Clarke’s lifetime as it is now.

Middle Room – Room 106
This seems an odd designation for the west room of the ell, but by the process of elimination, the middle room must be the room Clarke refers to as the middle room.

Kitchen – Room 107

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38 The list is incomplete, both because Vol. 1 (1755-1765) and Vol. 3 (1779-1787) are missing and because surely with the limited space not all work that was done is referenced in the diaries.

Keeping Room – Room 108
West room – Room 111
Study – Room 203

Sarah Chandler stated in 1897 that the Clarke sisters always referred to this room as their father’s study.

Bedroom – Probably refers to Room 205
Kitchen chamber – Room 201 or 202

1767, May 27  Our House caught fire upon the Roof
Sept. 2  Mending the Kitchen chimney, etc.
1768, Feb. 27  Swept – the Kitchen Chimney
1770, Sept. 12  White washing the Study
Sept. 10  Mr. Parkhurst began to shingle the House
1771, Oct. 24  Mr. Parkhurst finished the repairs
1773, June 22  Whitewashing the Kitchen Chamber
Sept. 7  Laying the Kitchen floor
1775, Oct. 25  Mended the middle Room Harth
Oct. 26  Laid the West Room Harth
Nov. 3  Laid the Bedroom Harth
1778, Sept. 29  Put up New Windows in Middle Room
Nov. 5  Painting windows (exterior, presumably)
Nov. 11  Papered the middle room
Nov. 25  At work on the Kitchen chamber chimney
Dec. 5  Got some sand for Mortar, etc.
Dec. 14  Mending Kitchen chimney and Harth
Dec. 15  Mr. Smith finished the Middle Room chimney and Mason . . .
1790, Mar. 29  Made and put up a ladder on ye House
June 3  Whit-washing the House
Sept. 10  Account Book: Mr. Emerson worked for me half a Day in Dec nailing clapboards on the house, etc.
Sept. 24  Then paid Mr. Wm Smith one pound and fifteen shillings for his own and his sons and apprentice’s Work in Plastering white-washing the House
1794, Nov. 10  Mr. Jer. Harrington mending Kitchen floor, etc.
1796, Dec. 8  Plaistering the chimney and clearing away rubbish, etc.
1798, June 18  Put up curtains in the West Room
1801, July 27  Shingling & repairs on the House
Nov. 28  Pointing round the chimney, on the roof – building a back in the chimney, Keeping Room
1804, Mar 8  Burnt the Kitchen chimney
Sept. 5  Fetched brick from Notomy [meaning Menotomy, now Arlington] (6th) getting sand
Sept. 11  Repairing the kitchen chimney top
Oct. 19  Paid Mr. Fitch of Bedford 7/9 for sawing slitwork [meaning?]
Bond’s building
A number of entries in Jonas Clarke’s diary refer to transactions with members of the Bond family. The Clarke family, and before them the Hancocks, had a relationship with members of the Bond family. When Rev. John Hancock deeded his 50-acre property to his son, Ebenezer, “Mr. Bond’s tenement,” which was within the limits of the property, was excepted from the sale.40 Where Bond’s building was or when it was built has not been discovered.41

The Bonds settled in Watertown, where John Bond, who became a tailor, was born in 1695. In 1726, John Bond bought two houses and lands in Lexington.42 One house was perhaps the one on what is now Massachusetts Avenue near Percy Road, where John’s grandson, Joshua (1745-1785) was living when his house was partly burned by the British in 1775.43 The location of the other house is not known. In 1770, Rev. Clark bought Bond’s farm, though no deed was recorded. By that time, members of the Bond family were making clothing for the Clarkes and Joshua Bond was doing work for Rev. Clarke. In addition to their business dealings, the Bonds and the Clarkes were apparently friends as well as neighbors. The information is presented here because after he purchased the Bond farm, Rev. Clarke moved one of Bond’s buildings “to his door,” and there is a possibility that the moved building was attached to the north end of the ell as an outbuilding.

1770, Feb. 26  Bou’t Mrs. Bond’s Farm
[This is perhaps Ruhamah Bond, whose husband John Bond (b.1695) made his will in 1769. The place and time of John’s death is unknown.]44
June 20  Built a wall against Fathr Bond’s Farm
Aug. 22  Moved a building from Mr. Bond’s Farm to my door
Sept. 28  Then reckoned and settled all acc’ts with Mr. Joshua Bond
Nov. 28  Settled with Mr. Joshua Bond to the present date.

Attached to the diary on the back of the page for December 1770 is an “Account of Expenses in Moving and [___?] Repairing store:”

Mr. Parker’s work  
Mr. Parkhurst’s ditto  
Mr. Wm Tidd’s ditto  
Mr. Henry Harrington’s  20-0-0  
Mr. Mason and W Loring  1-16-0  
Clapboards 532 ½ feet  8-0-0  
Double Tens (?) ½ of 1000  2-10-0  
Board Nails  1500  5-5-0  
Clapboards ditto ¼ of 1000  
Hinges  2-15-0  
Slitwork, Boards  1-15-0

40 Middlesex County Registry of Deeds 35-259.
43 Worthen (1966), 49-50.
1773, Feb. 17  Phebe Bond died
[She was a daughter of Joshua (b. 1720)]

1800, May 21  Breaking up Mr. Bond’s place
Nov. 6     Paid Mr. Bond 7/7

John Mascarene was a young man who lived with the Clarke’s in 1793. Between 1794 and 1805 he wrote several versions of a poem about Rev. Jonas Clarke’s country seat. The first half of the poem is devoted to a description of the gardens and trees surrounding the house. The rest describes the furnishings and gives some comments on the rooms in the house, such as the fact that the woodwork was unpainted. Of particular interest to us is the stanza in the 1794 version of the poem:

The lower floor has two front rooms
A Kitchen on behind
On one side a small parlour fixt
And an outhouse to them joined.

Was the outhouse mentioned by Mr. Mascarene the building that Rev. Clarke moved to his door in 1770? We know that by the time of Rev. Clarke’s death in 1805, there was a pump house and a chaise house north of the ell. These are apparently the two sheds shown in the c. 1840 painting of the house (see cover). As those two additions were demolished and replaced by a single shed north of the ell by 1866, we will never know the exact disposition of the moved building, or when the first additions north of ell were made.

1805-1844
Rev. Clarke died in 1805. His personal estate was valued at £944, his real estate at £5,500. Owing to the fact that Rev. Clarke had many surviving heirs, the estate was not settled until 1823. Rev. Clarke’s unmarried daughters, Elizabeth (Betty), born in 1763 and Sarah, born in 1774 continued to live in the house until their deaths in 1844 and 1843 respectively. In 1808, a number of lots from the estate fronting the common and what is now Bedford Street were sold at auction to pay debts of the estate. The proceeds included an allowance to Elizabeth to care for

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45 Jonas Clarke Diary, August 17, 1793.
46 Edwin B. Worthen, Jr.’s Hancock-Clarke House file in the Worthen Collection at the Cary Library contains notes on his examination of the versions of Mascarene’s poem in the Lexington Historical Society Archives. The printed version (accession # 5110) entitled A Dissertation of the Rev. Jonas Clarke’s Seat at Lexington, is taken from a manuscript version given to the Society by Mrs. Lucy Powers (accession #817). The manuscript version varies slightly from the printed version in that the last line of the stanza quoted in the text above says “And an outhouse to it joined,” instead of to them joined, implying that the outhouse was west of the study instead of north of both rooms. Worthen’s notes go on to say “there is another version, which came to the society when Dad (E. B. Worthen) was active, from Mrs. Whittemore of Arlington. ABW has it typed up. It differs somewhat – less polished. Entitled “A Description of a summer Rural prospect around the house,” it is written on long sheets of paper and at the end is attributed to Mr. Mascarene in 1794. This is a description of the outside; garden orchards, etc. Then follows “A Description of the Reverend Mr. Clarke’s House at Lexington.” This version also says the outhouse was to them joined.
47 A carte de visite dated 1866 at the Historic New England Archives shows the new single shed, as does the illustration in Charles Hudson’s History of Lexington, 1868.
48 Worthen, 1966, 15.
her father’s insane brother, Thomas, who died in 1809. The heirs sold more land in 1819. In 1823, the rest of the property was divided among the heirs. Three heirs, including Elizabeth Clarke, received portions of the house. What they received describes the rooms of the house as we know them, but indicate that Room 106 was apparently divided by then into “the bedroom north of said west room and the kitchen north of said bedroom as the same is now partitioned off.” The current kitchen, variously called in the division document the “Great Kitchen” and “the kitchen back of the east end of the house,” was given to another heir. Also mentioned in the division were “shed leading to the pump room containing the well, the pump room chamber, “the chaise house, and another building described as “the building adjoining the northeast part of the cellar viz ten feet wide and twenty feet long.” It is hard to imagine what this building might have been or how long it survived.

After 1823, Elizabeth and Sarah continued to live in the house. The heirs of the two thirds of the house not left to Elizabeth and of the other remaining real estate eventually disposed of their interest in the property. Perhaps by family agreement the impoverished Clarke sisters were allowed to remain in the house. It is unlikely under the circumstances that the Clarke sisters were able to do anything but the most necessary work on the house.

1845-1875
In 1845-1846, William Chandler, a prominent Lexington resident, purchased the remaining property in a set of complicated transactions with Clarke’s heirs. In 1846, Chandler sold the homestead and two-and-one-half acres of land to Joseph Eaton. Eaton was married to William Chandler’s cousin, Margaret Chandler. Mrs. Chandler’s niece was Sarah Chandler, born in 1819, who frequently visited the house as a girl and who wrote reminiscences of the house in 1897 shortly before her death.

The only major change to the Hancock-Clarke House occurred apparently during the first years of ownership by the Eatons, when the large original fireplace in the kitchen, with two ovens, one of which projected as a bulge into the shed north of the kitchen, was removed and a smaller fireplace built. The earlier fireplace probably filled the ell’s chimney bay up to the chimney girt and the space east of the current fireplace where the closet now is. Sarah Chandler mentioned that there was a partition from the fireplace to the east wall of the ell, just south of the exterior door that formed a small airlock entry in the kitchen formerly.

Apparently by 1866, the two sheds north of the ell were replaced by a single shed. The new shed is shown in a Carte de Visite dated to that year.

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49 Middlesex County Registry of Probate, Docket # 4539, Division of Real Estate.
50 Worthen 1966, 16.
51 Middlesex County Registry of Deeds 497-15.
52 Sarah Chandler, “Remembrances of the Hancock-Clarke House,” 1897. LHS Archives.
53 Carte de Visite, labeled 1866, in the collection of the Historic New England Archives.
In 1873, Mrs. Eaton died. Two years later Joseph Eaton put the property and some of its contents up for auction. The house and the same two-and-one-half acres of land were sold to Henry B. Brigham, whose large Victorian house abutted the Hancock-Clarke property to the north. In the early years of the their ownership, the Brigham’s rented out the Hancock-Clarke House. An early tenant, Mrs. Babcock, is said to have painted the Keeping Room (Room 108) for the first time. Preliminary paint research by Brian Powell indicates that grain painting, a popular Victorian treatment, was probably the finish that Mrs. Babcock applied. At the same time, Mrs. Babcock put canvas over the wallpaper that had been on the walls since the Clarke ownership. That wallpaper had been glued to rough boards with prominent cracks. The canvas provided a smooth surface for the new wallpaper Mrs. Babcock put up.

In 1884 for the first time historical markers were put on the Hancock-Clarke House and other houses involved in the events of April 19, 1775.

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55 Middlesex County Registry of Deeds 1359-235.
57 *Historical Monuments and Tablets erected by the Town of Lexington, 1884*. The committee authorized to undertake the work by Town Meeting stated, “[We] deem it advisable to have certain houses and other places of...
As time went by, the Hancock-Clarke House fell into disrepair and became difficult to rent. Mr. Brigham died in 1887. By the mid 1890s, his widow was determined to tear the house down and create, as she told a newspaper reporter, “One of those sprawling English lawns” where she could relax in a comfortable chair and “feel just like Queen Victoria.”

1894-1903
On October 10, 1894, the Lexington Historical Society appointed a committee “to see what steps could be taken towards preserving the Clarke House.” On March 3, 1896, Rev. Carlton Staples, minister of the Congregational Church and local historian, alerted the Lexington Historical Society Council that the house was about to be torn down. He urged “that some action be taken by the Society to prevent its demolition.” On October 24, 1896, the Society held a special meeting to consider purchase and removal of the Hancock-Clarke House. In fact, Rev. Staples had already purchased the house from Mrs. Brigham with the promise that it would be removed from her property within sixty days. The members voted to move the house to a portion of a lot across Hancock Street that George Muzzey agreed to sell to the Historical Society. The members of the Society also voted to raise $5,000 to cover the cost of purchasing the building, moving it, purchasing the new lot, and repairing the structure. A committee of fifteen ladies of the town was appointed to solicit subscriptions. They went door to door and “received contributions of a few pennies to a hundred dollars from each person.” With contributions from outside Lexington, the goal was met.

As to the condition of the house before the move, the only information we have is that a reporter from the Lexington Minuteman:

Went all over the house and examined it carefully. Apparently, the frame is sound and firm. The uprights and stringers show no signs of decay. The floors, however, have begun to sink and spring beneath the feet, and the ceiling is somewhat dilapidated. But these problems are not essential to the integrity of the building, and the general indications are that it will survive the strain of moving.

The house was moved on Nov. 23, 1896.

At a special meeting on January 20, when money to restore the moved building was not in hand, members were divided as to whether to move quickly or slowly. Rev. Staples advocated immediately “erecting the chimney and putting the house in as near an original condition as interest associated with the events of that day marked by suitable tablets, which, though inexpensive, should be neat, attractive and durable.” (p. 5).

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58 Boston Herald, 1896, as quoted in Whipple, op. cit.1984, 10.
59 Lexington Historical Society Records, vol. I. 165. LHS Archives
60 Lexington Historical Society Records, vol. I. 178. LHS Archives
63 Lexington Minuteman, Nov. 20, 1896.
possible internally and of making such outside repairs as were necessary and expedient.”

Others wished “to move slowly and decide upon the best and most proper form in which to finish the house and avoid mistakes” and “to delay ’til more money was subscribed and plans for the restoration of the building were fully matured.” By March 9, 1897 the Society authorized the committee in charge to complete the restoration. Not stated was whether those in favor of speed or caution had prevailed. On April 30, 1897, the Lexington Minuteman reported:

Work on the old Hancock-Clarke House is still in progress. All the old appurtenances to the same are being replaced as far as possible and every effort made to maintain the characteristics of other days so that is shall be typical of a New England home during the days of the revolution.

Post 1897 photos show the new windows 12 over 16 windows installed in during the restoration. Some window heads were apparently replaced and returns were added to the cornice on the east side of the house. On the interior of the ell the deteriorated easternmost part of the summer beam was replaced; the new piece of timber was held in place by iron straps. The gap between the plate and the southernmost rafter of the ell where the building had spread was filled in with a piece of wood, and the west chimney post/chimney girt joint that was deteriorated was covered with a piece of wood. Also visible in historic photographs is evidence was that the Society put up wallpapers in the front rooms and stairhall, and arranged displays of historic materials that were part of the LHS collections or that were newly donated by townspeople and others.

While we have no record of who the workmen were who refurbished the house, a note found in 1967 under the old paper, when the upstairs was being repapered, stated that “Samuel Gibley papered this house, Aug. 14, 1897.”

On October 1, 1897 the first meeting of the Society was held in the house. Someone donated a furnace in 1898 and the house was wired for electric lights. The decision to widen the door between kitchen and the keeping room so that members could sit in both rooms during meetings was made shortly thereafter.

By 1898, C. A. Wellington gave a talk to the Society members in which he described the process of reproducing the wallpaper in the Hancock-Adams Bedroom. He also touched upon his re-coloring of the large sample of the earlier wallpaper in the keeping room:

Mr. C. A. Wellington gave a most interesting description of the methods that had been followed in reproducing the wallpaper that had been placed upon the wall of the lower left-hand room. His remarks were illustrated by a square of the original paper and by other squares showing the work of reproduction in different stages of progress. Mr. Wellington also showed a large section of the boarding that had been cut from the wall in the lower right-hand room on which were revealed several feet of paper which had

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64 Lexington Historical Society Records, vol. I, 193. LHS Archives
65 Ibid., 193.
originally covered the walls of that room. A portion of this he had carefully retraced and recolored thus bringing out a very beautiful French design of exquisite detail.67

Rev. Staples summed up the work that had been done on the house, unfortunately without giving specifics as to what if anything was actually done to the interiors:

A cellar was prepared, the house was placed on a new foundation, new chimneys replaced the old defective ones and the house was thoroughly repaired from foundation to garret. The whole expenditure amounted to approximately $3,800.68

What is meant by “new chimneys” is uncertain. Railroad rails still under both chimneys were obviously installed before the move in 1896 to secure the two chimneys. Perhaps rebuilding the chimneys referred to the exterior stacks or other repairs short of actual rebuilding. (Mortar analysis would help to sort out the sequence of changes to the chimneys.)

In 1901, as a fire safety measure, “two dozen galvanized iron fire pails and two Babcock fire extinguishers were placed in the house.”69

The Hancock-Clarke House museum was off to a good start. Visitation went from 12,000 in 1900 to 20,000 in 1903.

1906
In the fall of 1906, the house committee was authorized “to have the old paint removed from the woodwork in the Hancock study room, and the original wood treated as might seem best by the “committee.”70

1908
In 1908, there was discussion about taking down the chimney in the kitchen because it was in an unsafe condition and rebuilding it along the same lines. Whether the work was carried out is not recorded.

1914-1915
In 1914 and 1915, three people interested in documenting the Hancock Clarke House were allowed to do so. Frank Cousins of Salem, authority on colonial architecture and author of a book on Salem Architecture, took twenty-four 8” by 10” photos of the interiors of the house. He gave copies to the Society, which are now in the Archives. Rev. Donald Millar gave the Society a complete set of architectural drawings of the house. Mary Northend, another author of books on historic architecture, requested permission to photograph the house.71 Her photos have not been located.

68 Ibid., vol. I, Mar. 20, 1900.
69 Ibid., 251.
1916
In 1916, repairs to “the front of the sill and wall” were authorized. It sounds like more sill replacement was needed because Miss Goddard noted that the “Original sill under the east end of the parlor was removed in 1917.”

1917
In 1917, a telephone was installed in the Hancock-Clarke House as a safety measure in case of fire.

1925
In 1925, William Roger Greeley was authorized “to the contract for the removal and replacement of such plaster at the Hancock-Clarke House as he deems necessary.” (Where such plasterwork might have been done is not known, but the record of potential plaster repairs should be kept in mind if walls are opened up for repairs in the future.)

1927
A major undertaking for the Lexington Historical Society in 1927 was the installation of a fire protection system in the Hancock-Clarke House, the Buckman Tavern and the Munroe Tavern. The systems considered were a dry pipe system of automatic sprinklers and a system of thermostatic controls connected directly to the Fire Department. Willard Brown, local architect with an interest in historic buildings, “spoke of his reluctance to have the sprinkler system installed in the main rooms and so destroy the charm and atmosphere of the old buildings.” He advised installation in the kitchens, basements and attics. Edwin B. Worthen suggested a combination of the two systems. “He would have automatic sprinklers in all basements, attics, closets, sheds and under all stairways. In the main rooms the thermostatic controls should be installed as they are placed flush with the ceiling, are inconspicuous and would in no way detract from the charm of the rooms.” The sprinklers were installed by Grinnell Co. and the thermostats were installed by L. W. Bills.

1930-1931
In 1930, the Hancock-Clarke House committee received an estimate for minor repairs to the floors, sills and window stools, but whether the work was done is uncertain. At the same time repairs to the chimney and reshingling the roof with fireproof shingles were investigated. The next year the roof was reshingled with the asbestos cement shingles that are still in place on the gabled part of the house. The shingles were made by the Johns Mansfield Company. The company issued a brochure about the project.

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73 Mina K. Goddard, “The Story of the Hancock-Clarke House,” June 29, 1920, p. 43. LHS Archives. Miss Goddard must have meant the west sill of the parlor.
74 Ibid., Mar. 13, 1917 (p. 188).
75 Ibid., Oct. 27, 1915 (p. 273)
76 Ibid., Feb. 7, 1927 (p. 284).
77 Ibid., (p. 285).
78 Ibid., May 1930 (p. 273)
79 Ibid., Mar. 10, 1930 (p. 332).
In 1937, plumber Vernon Page connected the plumbing system in the Hancock-Clarke House to the town’s sewer system. Otherwise, the only work on the house in 1930s and early 1940s on record involved revisions to the gutters and downspouts, and replacement of eight feet of rotted sill and water table by the front door in 1941. It was not until 1947 that discussion of repairs resumed. Because the house was unheated, moisture had caused floor boards to buckle. The decision was made to run the furnace in the winter.

In 1950, Mr. Parker Reed was thanked for the sconces (the ones still in the house, apparently) that he made and installed at the house.

In the early 1950s, there was discussion of the need to repair the Hancock-Clarke House. It was noted that floor boards in the kitchen were “paper thin.” Work mentioned included repairs to the sills, the kitchen floor, the front hall, and the back stair hall. It was also noted that the Society would have to have a special fund drive to pay for the repairs. Custance Bros. installed termite shields in 1950. A new heating system was installed in 1955 and Mr. Custance gave the exterior two coats of paint. By 1961, repairs that had been under discussion for several years were completed. They included repairs to the chimney, and, “based on a prior survey by Mr. Hodges” repairs to the floors and the bulging wall.

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82 Gordon D. Richards to the Lexington Historical Society, June 31, 1941. LHS Archives.
84 Ibid., Sept. 15, 1954.
1962-1963
In 1962, Robert Lanchester prepared seven sheets of measured drawings of the Hancock-Clarke House for the Historic American Buildings Survey.  

In March of 1963, Custance Bros. were authorized to remove paint from “the walls and matching shelving in the kitchen.”

In 1963 certain repairs were recommended by Leslie Reed. Of these, apparently, only the “repairs to the fascia boards under the eaves of the roof on the front part of the house,” and possibly repairs to the gutter over the front door were carried out. Architectural fragments removed during this process are stored in the attic and labeled as such.

1964-1967
On April 7, 1964, the Society received from the estate of Mrs. Ruth Brigham Jackson the original site of the Hancock-Clarke House containing 15,625 square feet of land. The parcel west of it, containing 15, 625 square feet of land and the barn, was purchased from the estate by the Society for $2,500. The receipt of the original site naturally generated interest in returning the Hancock-Clarke House to it. Consequently, a committee was formed to study the possibility of moving the house back across the street. The committee’s report was submitted on February 1, 1965. It included cost estimates, suggested alternatives and suggested schedule, Edwin B. Worthen, Jr.’s first report on the site, and a proposal from Roland Robbins for archaeological excavations to locate the original foundations of the house. Mr. Abel, archaeologist of the National Park Service, recommended by Abbott Cummings of SPNEA, was also consulted, but he indicated that he was too busy with the Minuteman Park to do the work. On April 4, 1965, at the annual meeting of the Society, the sense of the meeting was that “steps should be taken toward relocation of the house.” In 1965 a Development Committee was formed to work on a plan for moving the house and funding the work.

In November of 1965 Robbins began digging, with the help of a man operating a backhoe. The cellar under the house, called 6-F1 and 6-F2, was quickly found. Later in November, the cellar hole west of the ell, known as 6-F3 was found. Subsequently three more cellar holes were found. Over the winter of 1965-1966, members of the Society under the direction of Charles Cole washed and sorted of the artifacts. Starting in April of 1966 and continuing through the summer young people began sifting the dirt that had been removed from the various cellars. Rebuilding the foundations, which had been damaged in preparation for the move in 1896 was considered and rejected. In Nov. 1967 the site of the well northeast of the ell was excavated.

88 HABS MA-549.
LHS Archives.
1969-1973
In 1969, the wallpaper was removed from the front hall, and the brackets from the Thomas Hancock House and the panel from the Brattle Square Meeting House, which had been displayed in the hall since shortly after the house was moved in 1896, were removed.93

In 1970, Sears Roebuck’s offer to repaint the house in exchange for permission to feature the house in advertisements was accepted. They proposed to use latex paint. The Society selected a “curry” color “after research showed that it to be approximately the shade of the first known paint applied to the house.”94 During the painting some leaking was observed at the eaves near what is now the southeast corner of the house. Donald M. Muirhead, architect of West Newton, who had worked on the Buckman Tavern, surveyed the building and noted that failure of the flashing around the main chimney and at the ridge was causing the leaks.95

On July 17, 1971, the Hancock-Clarke House was designated a National Historic Landmark. The next year, after years of discussion about roof leaks, the roof was finally repaired by Custance Bros. at a cost of $300.96

In 1973, Custance Bros. whitened the ceiling in the Dorothy Quincy Bedroom (Room 205).97 Also in 1973, a security system was installed in the house.

1974-1976
In May of 1974, the moving of the house across Hancock Street was authorized. The move occurred on Nov. 26, 1974 and was the result of a tremendous effort of fundraising and planning by many members of the Lexington Historical Society. Charles Cole was the architect in charge of the designing the new foundation, which necessarily obliterated the remains of the original one. He also designed the new basement that was to house the archives and curatorial storage, and the addition to the north for museum displays and reception of visitors. The two components of the north addition, each with a different east-west dimension and roofline, were intended to reproduce the sheds shown in the oil painting of the house of c. 1840 (see cover). All changes to the exterior had to be approved by the Historic District Commission as the property is situated in the Hancock Street Historic District.98 Lexington resident, Hideo Sasaki, offered to help with the landscaping.99

98 Lexington’s historic districts, the third oldest historic districts in the Massachusetts, were established in 1956.
At the time of the work, the idea of rebuilding the fireplace in the kitchen to the larger dimensions indicated by physical evidence and reminiscences of its pre-1850 appearance was considered. The Society hired David Hart and Abbott Cummings of SPNEA to assess the construction date of the Hancock-Clarke House and the sheds, and to suggest the appropriate design for a reproduction kitchen fireplace.100 Their conclusion was that the ell was never a freestanding structure, and that it had been built at the same time as the gabled part of the house. Anne Grady’s project to document the frame of the house of 1974 and 1975, including photographs of features in the building now hidden and a model of the framing, added to the findings of Hart and Cummings.101 The rebuilding of the fireplace was abandoned, when funds had to be diverted to address structural problems discovered in the ell.

In early March of 1975, the connection between the summer beam and the plates in the gambrel wing was discovered to have failed. David Hart was hired to recommend structural repairs to the architect, Charles Cole. Hart noted that:

One of the summer beams, spanning 24 feet, had been previously spliced at the street [east] end. The new wood and joint subsequently failed due to water and insect damage; the other [west] end also failed and the situation was aggravated by settlement of the frame which pulled the post away from the summer [beam] and plate.¹⁰²

Among the options for making the joints structurally sound, the piecing in of new material at either end of the summer beam and the placement in the beam of a steel flitch plate, 3/8 of an inch wide by 7 inches high, in the beam was chosen because it preserved most of the summer beam. Steel was used to further reinforce the plates, post and rafter.¹⁰³

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¹⁰³ Ibid., 4.
By April of 1976, the work of moving, repairing and enlarging the Hancock House was virtually complete. Otis Brown, in charge of fund raising reported that the project, estimated to cost $100,000, had cost $105,000. As part of the refurbishing and restoration, some Clarke family furniture was purchased at auction in 1974. The wallpaper in the keeping room was reproduced by the Birge Wallpaper Company from the paper preserved on a section of horizontal boarding salvaged in 1896 that was kept in the Archives.

In 1976, the Historical Society applied for a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to partly fund exterior paint research and writing of specifications. Dr. Judith Selwyn of the SPNEA Consulting Services determined that, although there were many layers of paint on the house, the yellow ochre shown on the c. 1840 oil painting was close to the original color. Because latex-based paint used in the previous painting in 1970 had deteriorated and blistered, Dr. Selwin recommended that an oil-based paint would be used this time. On the south and east sides, stripping was specified to return the surface to an adequate condition. Two coats of paint were specified on those sides, while on the other sides one coat was required. (See Paint Section for summary of the findings with regard to the paint history of the exterior.) Dick Perry of Peter’s Painters did the work.

1977-1979

In 1977, roof leaks were noted in the ell. Replacement of the asbestos shingles with red cedar shingles was recommended. In October of 1978, Dan McCabe, a Lexington contractor, was given the job. Once the roof was opened up, it was apparent that more work to replace components, including roof framing members and sheathing, was necessary. The cost was

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104 Ibid., April 4, 1976.
105 Ibid., May 16, 1974.
106 Ibid., Feb. 20 1975. See also a photograph of the new wallpaper published in the *Lexington Minuteman* on December 19, 1975.
estimated at $10,000.\textsuperscript{110} In March of 1979, Charles Cole gave a detailed report on the work done:

- Structural members of the main trusses, rear [west] plate and ridge pole had to be replaced or strengthened.
- Rear roof deck had to be replaced (75%).
- New cornice required for all dormers.
- All new copper flashing required.
- New trim at cornice of building required.
- New trim at roof break cornice required.
- New lead flashing at chimney required.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., Feb. 15, 1979.
1980 to present.
After 1979, the records of the Lexington Historical Society were no longer entered into volumes. Some information about the subsequent history of the building can be found in the Hancock-Clarke House file boxes, and in the file drawer of Society records in the Archives, but the information is less complete than before 1979.

In 1986, there was again concern about the structural soundness of the ell. James W. Wolahan, structural engineer, examined the building. He found problems at the junction with the gabled part of the house, with spreading of the gambrel frame that caused the roof to settle, and a pronounced bow of the east wall. What portion of the remedies that he suggested were done is unknown.

In 1989, painting of the exterior was put out for bids, and presumably carried out.

In 1995 the oil tank was enclosed, and the gift shop shed was built on top of an existing cement pad in the northwest corner of the 1975 addition.

In 2004, a steel gusset was placed on the chimney girt and northwest chimney post in the study.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

D. Building History by Category

Foundation and site

Foundation
The current foundation of the Hancock-Clarke House of concrete was constructed in 1974. At that time the original part of the building the foundation was faced with granite blocks, though there is no indication that granite facing had been used in the original foundation. (A description of the building in 1860 stated that, “The foundation is of rough country stone, the remainder of brick. The whole is coated with mortar of a very durable description.”112)

The remains of the original cellar hole, excavated in 1964-1965, while the house stood across the street, showed the walls to have been dry laid rubble stone. Later the walls were pointed with mortar and white washed.113 The cellar, labeled 6-F1 and 6-F2 for the portions under the ell and gabled house respectively, extended under about a third of the ell and a part of the east room of the front part of the house. Robbins did not find any evidence of foundation footings or underpinning of the exterior walls of the house, which were separate from the cellar foundation. Presumably, the move in 1896 destroyed any evidence of the house’s original underpinnings. The upper portion of the cellar walls was removed in 1896 so that railroad rails could be inserted under the building before it was moved.

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112 Mt. Auburn Memorial, 1860. LHS Archives.
Site:
The house was built in the midst of Rev. Hancock’s fifty-acre property that extended on both
sides of the current Hancock Street from the Lexington Green to apparently as far back as Adams
Street. Historic descriptions and photographs indicate that there were pleasure and vegetable
gardens south of the house and a barn and cow yard north of the house. The detailed description
of the property given in the division of Jonas Clarke’s real estate is useful in figuring out the
layout of the buildings, gardens and fences on the property in 1823.

Rev. Donald Millar made an attempt to draw a plan of the site based on Sarah Chandler’s
Remembrances and the engraving of the house that appeared in Benson Lossing’s book, *The
Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution or Illustrations by pen and pencil of the History,
Biography, Scenery, Relics and Traditions of the War for Independence* of 1851. In a letter to
Miss Goddard, Rev. Millar mentions wanting to see again her pencil copy of a sketch of the
property made about 1815 that was in the hands of the then owner of Jonas Clarke’s diaries that
was included with her notes on the diaries.

115 Middlesex County Registry of Probate, docket # 4539.
116 Rev. Donald Millar, letter to Mina K. Goddard, n.d. LHS Archives. Miss Goddard’s notes on the Clarke diaries
have not been located in the LHS Archives.
In 1846, the remaining Clarke Property of two-and-one-half acres was sold to Joseph Eaton. That same parcel was bequeathed to the Lexington Historical Society by Mrs. Ruth Brigham Jackson in 1964. Another two-and-one-half acres, which abutted the site to the west, was purchased by the Society in the same year.117 Since the return of the house to the original site in 1974, the Lexington Field and Garden Club has maintained an herb garden east of the house.

V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Framing and Exterior Walls

Framing:

The framing of the Hancock-Clarke House is a mixture of oak and softwood timbers, as expected for the date of construction when oak supplies were diminishing. In the south part of the house the posts, joists and purlins are of oak, while the roof trusses are of softwood. The roof framing system conforms to the norms for the time in the region in that the principal rafter/common purlin system is used. Underneath the entry are log joists that have been sistered. Elsewhere the cellar ceiling frame is of sawn joists and hewn girders.

One distinctive feature of the building is the use of deep joists in Rooms 111, 203 and 205. The sawn joists are approximately two inches wide, and 8 ½ inches deep, slightly deeper than the beams to which they are attached. This allowed a lath and plaster ceiling to be applied below the beams, concealing the ceiling framing. Deep joists such as these were used in England from the late 16th century on. In New England their use did not become prevalent until the late eighteenth century. This is surprising because planks two inches thick were a standard commodity from the seventeenth century on in Massachusetts, and their size was regulated by law.118

In the ell, virtually all of the framing is oak except for the summer beam on the first floor and the parts of the roof frame that were rebuilt in 1979: these are softwood. The framing of the ell is the expected framing for a gambrel roofed two-story cottage, except where the ell joins the south part of the house. For whatever reason, the framing there is missing some vital components in this bent. The southernmost bent of the ell does not have a tie beam to form a truss with the rafters of the gambrel roof. Consequently, the rafters of the lower slope of the roof at the ell’s south end are birdmouthed over the east and west plates instead of being mortised into a first floor ceiling beam, a tie beam really, as they are in the northernmost three bents of the ell. Such a truss would have prevented the sideways spread of the east and west walls of the ell, which has probably plagued the house almost from the beginning. The absence of a tie beam in the southernmost bent of the ell means that the joists that would normally be framed into it, are secured by less adequate means. The joists on the first floor are supported from beneath by a horizontal sheathing board nailed to the north side of the studs of the south part of the house. On the second floor, ceiling joists rest on the chord of the upper truss of the gambrel roof, again instead of being mortised into a beam, even though their ends are shaped to fit into a mortise that is less deep than the joists themselves. No explanation for this truncated framing is apparent. It almost seems as though the decision to join the ell to the main house was made after construction of the south part of the house was begun. Were it not for the fact that the joists of the cellar are joined to the north sill of the south part of the house as they would be in coeval construction, the evidence might be interpreted to suggest that the two parts of the house were not joined in the very beginning.

Exterior Walls:
The exterior walls are finished with clapboards of varying dates. The oldest, distinguished by their skived ends, date from the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. The practice of skiving or feathering the ends of clapboards and overlapping them where they meet was a weatherproofing measure. Other clapboards with straight cut ends date from the later nineteenth or twentieth centuries.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Sash and Doors

Sash:
The current windows are vertically sliding sash with twelve over sixteen panes of glass, or in the
case of windows in the attic and ell, are sash of smaller dimensions but with lights of similar
size. All windows have muntins that are 7/8 of an inch wide composed of a fillet with a quarter
round on either side. The windows were installed in 1897.

The windows have been changed at least twice in the building’s lifetime. The earliest windows
are probably those shown in the painting of the house made c. 1840 (see cover) that had nine
over nine lights. Those windows, if they are original, would have had muntins an inch or more
in width, which were typical of the early Georgian period. From the mid nineteenth century until
1897, the windows had six over six lights.

Doors:
The front door with its six flat panels is a c. 1800 replacement of the original door. Doors in the
Georgian period generally had raised field panels. One theory is that the door to the ell, with
twelve raised-field panels, might have been the original front door that was moved to the ell
when the current door was installed at the front. If so, the door would have had to be cut down
somewhat to fit the opening in the ell’s east wall. That ell door was faced on the interior at some
point with vertical boards. The other exterior door in the ell, the west door, is of vertical boards
on the exterior and horizontal boards on the interior, and is a typical utilitarian door of the
eighteenth century.

Doors on the interior are paneled; the major doors have six panels. Three vertical board doors
are found in secondary locations.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Roof and Gutters

Roof:
The late nineteenth century photographs of the house show wood shingles on the roof. In 1931, cement asbestos shingles made by the Johns Manville Company were placed over the wood shingles. The company produced a brochure about the project promoting the use of these fireproof shingles. In 1979, the ell was re-roofed with red cedar shingles.

Gutters:
Photographs from the 1890s show wood gutters on the gabled part of the building and the ell. There were at that time metal downspouts on the front corners of the building and a downspout boxed in wood at the junction between the ell and the front part of the house on the east side. In 1931, the asbestos shingles were installed to cover the gutters. Now the only working gutter or downspout is short piece of gutter over the front door with a single downspout at its west end.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 106. Study; west ell room

In Rev. Clarke’s time, this room was called the middle room, perhaps because there was, or had been, an earlier house on the property adjoining it to the west. This would have made Room 106 the middle of a file of three rooms east to west. John Mascarene in his poem of 1794 refers to this room as a small parlor. By 1823, the room was divided by a partition into a “kitchen” in the north part and a bedroom in the south part.119

During repairs to the house in 1975, a mortise for a substantial beam was found in the north sill of the ell, just where the brickwork for the two fireplaces is now joined. The mortise lines up exactly with the north/south cellar ceiling beam under the partition on the first floor. This evidence suggests that cellar-ceiling beam once ran all the way to that north sill, whereas now the brickwork of the ell’s chimney interrupts it. Taken a step further, the evidence seems to indicate that there was no fireplace in Room 106 originally, that it was just a small unheated room. The fact that early riven lath intrudes on the space above the current study fireplace also supports the theory that there was no fireplace here originally. When the fireplace might have been built in this room is unknown. It was there by 1775 -- Rev. Clarke notes in his diary that the middle room (Room 106) hearth was mended.120

Three years later, Rev. Clarke stated that new windows were put up in the middle room and then the room was wallpapered.121

Sarah Chandler described the room as Mr. Hancock’s study. There must have been a tradition by the nineteenth century, probably passed down by the Misses Clarke, that the room was so used.122

In 1906, the Society authorized the removal of paint from the study, and treatment of the wood in whatever way the “committee” thought best.123

Building Element Description

| Framing                  | West plate: plain, unbeaded  
|                         | Summer beam: exposed and beaded, though cut down by three inches from its depth in the kitchen; westernmost 3 feet replaced in 1975.  
|                         | Summer beam has a steel flitch plate installed in 1975 across its length.  
| Floor                   | Wide softwood boards painted brown  

119 Middlesex County Registry of Probate, Docket #4539. Division of Jonas Clarke’s real estate, 1823.  
121 Ibid., Sept. 29, 1778; Nov. 11, 1778.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walls</th>
<th>Plaster; on the north wall the plaster is attached to diagonal lath.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Plain, five inches in height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornice</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Plaster, apparently on 19th century sawn lath, except for c. 18 inches on either side of the summer beam where plaster was replaced in 1975 after repairs to the beam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireplace/Firebox</td>
<td>Fireplace is recessed behind the chimney girt. Reveals are finished with a plain board with bead at the front edge. Exposed brick jambs without wooden covering; plain board soffit above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantelpiece/Chimneybreast</td>
<td>Plain frieze board attached with hand-wrought nails (i.e. 18th century). Plain mantel shelf with bed molding beneath that does not look early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>Four rows of bricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>106: Door in west wall to exterior: Horizontal boards on the interior, some of which may be replacements; vertical boards on the exterior. Door studded in many places with hand wrought nails. 110: Door to north closet: two panel, raised field on room side 111: Door to kitchen: two panels, raised field on study side. 114: Door to Room 111: two panels, raised field on the Room 106 side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door Trim</td>
<td>110: Door to north closet: architrave with backband molding similar to those throughout the house. 111: Door to kitchen: plain architrave not mitered at corners. 114: Door to Room 111: plain architrave mitered at corners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>1-107, 1-108, 1-109: 4/4 lights; muntins 7/8th of an inch wide with quarter rounds and fillet between, similar to those in the rest of the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>106: Door in west wall to exterior: Suffolk latch and sliding bolt. Large strap hinges with butterfly shaped mounting at the doorframe, secured by hand wrought nails. 110: Door to north closet: Norfolk latch with thumb tab inside closet; H hinges with foliate ends. Paint shadows show that the door previously had short strap hinges. 111: Door to kitchen: Suffolk latch, strap hinges with H mounting on doorframe. Strap hinges on this door previously. 114: Door to Room 111: Suffolk latch with unusual trefoil shape on thumb tab side (reproduction). H hinges with foliate ends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hinges on shutters: all small H hinges with foliate ends (original?).

| Paint          | Closet door shows one grey layer below the current. The hinge scar shows no early paint. The mantel finishes have darkened wood below, as if the mantel was unfinished for a while. All of the interior shutters, hinges and woodwork show an early gray layer (including the splayed window jamb trim.) The door to the passageway leading to Room 111 and its casing have a very similar paint history to the rest of the room. |

Figure 26. Study, north end in 2007.

Figure 27. Study, north and west sides, in 1914. Frank Cousins, photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 107. Kitchen; east ell room

The kitchen, the second largest room in the house, is a good example of a working space in an eighteenth century house. The kitchen preserves most of its original features, including horizontal feather-edged paneling, a fine example of a dresser of the period, uncased framing, and the house’s secondary staircase that gives access to the second floor of the ell and once held stairs to the cellar. Although portions of the ceiling and summer beam were replaced in kind in 1975, the room has been significantly altered at the north end of the room where the original fireplace was removed in the 1850s and replaced with a smaller one.

As the center of food preparation, the kitchen must have seen heavy use in the eighteenth century, especially during the period when the Clarke’s family of twelve children were growing up. In fact, there are more references to repairs to the kitchen, specifically to the chimney and floors, in Rev. Clarke’s diary than to any other room in the house.

John Mascarene gives us our first, if somewhat romanticized, glimpse of the kitchen in his poem of 1794:

The kitchen has a dresser white,
Affixed to it are shelves
With pewter standing and so bright
That two might see themselves.

Under the dresser there might be seen
Some copper, brass and tin
Like crystal stored in brightness be
Some outside and others in.

Brass candlesticks of different kinds
Stand on the mantel piece
As clear as amber may be found
Without one spot of grease.

By 1823, the kitchen was called the “Great Kitchen” in probate documents, as an indication that there was by that time a second kitchen in the north half of Room 106.

Building a reproduction of eighteenth century fireplace, in place of the smaller one installed in the 1850s, is an idea that has been around since 1896. Several people who remembered the earlier fireplace reminisced about it in the early years of LHS ownership. Descriptions indicate a large fireplace with two ovens at the sides, one large and one small. Apparently the large oven projected as a bulge in the masonry into the shed to the north (see Section on Original Construction for quotes about the previous fireplace). By the late 1870s the fireplace was closed.
up and only the oven on the right side was accessible. Mrs. Babcock remembered that she used to put things in the oven to keep them away from flies. When the firebox was closed, a wood stove must have replaced the fireplace for cooking.\(^{124}\) Evidence of a stove pipe hole remains above the fireplace.

Since the Lexington Historical Society acquired the building, floorboards have been replaced, and stripping of paint from the staircase, the dresser and the walls of the south part of the room has occurred. Apparently the north end of the room was painted in the early years of the LHS ownership because early photographs show a top coat of dark paint peeling to show a light paint underneath. This fits with Brian Powell’s observation that a light paint, possibly whitewash, was found was the first layer of paint on the walls. When the current chocolate brown paint was applied is not known.

### Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framing</strong></td>
<td>Summer beam uncased and beaded. Easternmost 3 feet replaced in 1975. Beam has a steel flitch plate installed in 1975 across its length. Corner and chimney posts exposed and undecorated. East plate, partly missing and partly replaced with metal in 1976. All framing is exposed: except the east chimney post, which is cased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floor</strong></td>
<td>Wide boards painted brown with many cuts indicating replacements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walls</strong></td>
<td>South, east and part of west walls: horizontal feather edged sheathing of the earliest sort in which boards with grooves alternate with boards with feathers. North wall, part of the west wall and staircase enclosure: Vertical paneling with small bead at the joining of boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseboard</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cornice</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ceiling</strong></td>
<td>Plaster on probably 19(^{th}) century sawn lath except for c. 18 inches on either side of the summer beam where plaster was replaced in 1975 after repairs to the beam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fireplace/Firebox</strong></td>
<td>Mid-19(^{th}) century replacement of original large fireplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mantelpiece/ Chimneybreast</strong></td>
<td>Plain boards cover the fireplace jambs. There is a flat overmantel panel above, with evidence of having been cut for a stove pipe previously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hearth</strong></td>
<td>Six rows of bricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doors</strong></td>
<td>104: Door to exterior: the 12 panel exterior door appears to have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

faced with vertical boards on the interior at some point.
108: Door to Reception area to the north: Reproduction two panel door.
109: Door to closet east of fireplace: Door, apparently dating from revisions to the chimney in the mid-19th century, is made of three vertical boards with small beads at one edge.
111: Door to Room 106: Two panel, flat panels on kitchen side.
112: Door to former cellar stairs: vertical board door.
113: Door to Room 108: Six panel door, flat panels Room 107 side.

| Door Trim | 104: Door to exterior: plain casing.  
108: Door to reception area: plain board casing not mitered at corners.  
109: Door to closet east of fireplace: no casing  
111: Door to Room 106: Plain casing with bead at inner edge, mitered at corners.  
112: Door to former cellar stairs: no trim  
113: Door to Room 108: Plain casing with bead at inner edge, mitered at corners. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Six over nine sash installed in 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>Plain trim with a bead at the edge of the reveals and soffits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hardware | 104: Door to exterior: Reproduction strap hinges, Suffolk latch and modern bolt.  
108: Door to reception area to the north: 3 reproduction HL hinges.  
109: Door to closet east of fireplace: large reproduction HL hinges.  
111: Door to Room 106: Suffolk latch (original?), strap hinges on reverse.  
112: Door to former cellar stairs: H hinges with foliate ends and Suffolk latch.  
113: Door to Room 108: Suffolk latch; H hinges with foliate ends on the reverse. |
| Special feature | Staircase: The staircase has relatively short balusters with vase-shaped turnings. The well-worn handrail is molded on both sides. Both of these features are consistent with 1730s construction. |
| Paint | The painted surfaces in many areas show a grey/white thin layer, possibly a whitewash, -- a dark red/brown and the present grey. There appeared to be a consistent grey/white early coat, thin and ‘not a fancy paint.’ The summer beams show only one layer of current paint. The north girt showed a layer of dark brown below the current paint. The stained wood paneling at the south wall and behind the shelves showed evidence of careful paint stripping.  
The stairs in the kitchen, both the stringers and risers appeared to have been stripped of paint. The areas around the stair adjoining the stair showed variable paint history indicating past reconstruction of the stair. |
Figure 28. Eighteenth century dresser in the kitchen in 2007.

Figure 29. Kitchen, west wall in 1914. Frank Cousins, photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 108. Keeping Room; southeast room

When Rev. Jonas Clarke referred to this room as the keeping room, he was using a term common since the 17th century for the less formal of the two principal rooms in a house. In keeping with the convention of identifying the importance of a room by its decorative treatment, Room 108 is less elaborately decorated than Room 111, the parlor on the opposite side of the chimney.

The woodwork in Room 108, the paneled fireplace wall, the beaded post and beam cases that project below the ceiling and the classical cornice moldings that dress the beam cases and the fireplace wall are representative of early Georgian work in the region. What distinguishes this room is that the woodwork has not been altered in any way. Save for the shutters, which were mishung in 1897 so that three of the shutters that belonged in the parlor are hung in this room, the room retains its original features.

John Mascarene described the Keeping Room in his poem in 1794:

With perfect neatness smiling round
   No painted wood is seen,
But the two front rooms papered found
   One pink, the other green.

Some images in one are shown [referring to Room 108].

It has always been assumed that the wallpaper found beneath a later canvas covering was an English or French paper on the walls of the room in 1775, of which a 3 by 4 foot sample still attached to underlying boards was saved in 1897 and is now in the LHS Archives. There are several reasons to doubt this. First, the surviving paper is glued to rough sawn boards with considerable cracks in between the boards. The reverse sides of these boards are smooth and slightly worn as though they might have previously been floorboards. These boards are nothing like the boards that survive under the dry wall in Room 111, which are very smoothly finished and flush at the edges. One would assume that the backing for the original paper in Room 108 would have been similar to that in Room 111. Second, the fragment in the LHS Archives shows an “Arch” paper that is identical to two American-made wallpapers that were available in Boston in the late 1780s. One was installed in Elmwood in Cambridge about 1787 and the other was in the Oliver Wright House in Sturbridge about 1789. This particular Arch design can also be identified as one of the wallpapers shown on a billhead of Appleton Prentiss, a Boston wallpaper seller, though several versions of the paper were available from other manufacturers. The Arch pattern wallpapers, which were copied from earlier English wallpapers, were popular into the

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125 “Eliza came down into the Keeping Room for the first time [after an illness],” Rev. Jonas Clark diary, Mar. 14, 1796.
126 John Mascarene, Poem, 1794 version. LHS Archives.
1790s. It could be that John Mascarene was describing a previous wallpaper in the room when he stated that the wallpaper was pink and had some images. It is not even certain that the Hancock-Clarke House Arch paper had a pink ground originally. The surviving sample in the LHS Archives has a half yellow/orange and half pink ground. An explanation for the difference in colors on the sample was revealed when the LHS Records indicated that in a talk on the wallpapers, Mr. [C. A.] Wellington stated that he had re-colored half of the large sample of the keeping room wallpaper that had been preserved in what he believed was the paper’s original pink ground color. He also retraced the design in black.\textsuperscript{128} American Arch wallpapers were available with grounds that were gray, dark blue, pink, and yellow.\textsuperscript{129}

It is interesting to note that a description of the room in 1860 implies that the Arch paper was not so old at the time:

> The paper in the next room looked, in our eyes, to the full as ancient as that in the opposite, but, as we were informed that it was only forty years since it laid on the shelf of some Boston paper store, we concluded it best to consider it rather modern in style than otherwise. This must have been quite handsome when first put on.\textsuperscript{130}

In 1975, a reproduction of the Arch paper, made by the Birge Wallpaper Company was applied to the walls in the room.\textsuperscript{131}

Mrs. Babcock, an early renter from Mrs. Brigham, repapered Room 108 probably in the mid 1870s. She put canvas cloth over the Arch paper and its rough board backing so that the new wallpaper she applied would not crack. She is also said to have painted the woodwork in the room for the first time. There are two layers of paint below the current paint applied in 1897, the first grey and a second layer of grain painting, which was a popular treatment at the time in which paint was used to simulate real wood. It is unlikely that the woodwork was painted again before 1896, so perhaps the keeping room had been painted once between 1846, when Sarah Chandler tells us that the woodwork was unpainted, and the mid 1870s, when Mrs. Babcock apparently applied the grain painting.

Regarding the tiles around the fireplace, in 1851 Benson Lossing noted that in the “room is one of those ancient fire-places, ornamented with pictorial tiles, so rarely found in New England.”\textsuperscript{132} It seems as that the tiles were later covered with some sort of fireplace insert, a popular method in the period of improving the efficiency of a fireplace because by 1860 a description in the *Mount Auburn Memorial* stated that “The tiles were not visible at the fireplace in this room, although we were assured that they were still there under cover of the sheet iron.”\textsuperscript{133} However,

\textsuperscript{129} Nylander et al. op. cit, 65.
\textsuperscript{130} *Mount Auburn Memorial*, Mar 11, 1860.
\textsuperscript{133} *Mount Auburn Memorial*, Mar 11, 1860.
the tiles there now are Dutch tiles made about 1800 that were installed in 1898.\textsuperscript{134} Apparently, the tiles previously in the room had been removed by then.

### Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing</th>
<th>The framing in the keeping room, posts, girts and summer beam, is all enclosed in beaded cases.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards, painted brown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Walls            | **Fireplace wall:** Fully paneled. Division of panels into smaller intermediate panels and larger top and bottom panels is repeated across the wall and the three doors in the wall. As in the parlor, a cyma molded cornice runs across the top of the wall below the chimney girt case reiterating the changes in plane of the wall below.  
**South, east, and north walls:** Drywall installed in 1975, apparently, covered with reproduction of the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century wallpaper by Birge Co. installed in 1975. |
| Baseboard        | **South and east baseboards:** six-and-one half inches high with partially hidden cyma on top.  
**North baseboard:** five inches high with same cyma molding profile on top. |
| Cornice          | A cornice composed of two cyma moldings, similar to that below the girt case on the fireplace wall, runs along the upper sides of all the beam cases. |
| Ceiling          | Plaster, probably original                                                                      |
| Fireplace/Firebox| The fireplace recess is larger than that in the parlor opposite. The recess steps back from the plane of the rest of the wall in two steps of about 5 inches each. A bolection molding surrounds the firebox. Pictorial tiles installed in 1898 trim the fireplace. |
| Mantelpiece/ chimneybreast | Above the fireplace are two raised-field overmantel panels.                                    |
| Hearth           | Two rows of square brick tiles. Cuts in the floorboards show that the hearth was once much wider. |
| Doors            | 113:Door to the Kitchen: Six raised-field panels  
115:Door to the closet north of the fireplace: Three raised-field panels  
116: Door to the closet south of the fireplace: Six raised-field panels |

\textsuperscript{134} S. Lawrence Whipple, \textit{The Hancock-Clarke House} (1984), 15.
117: Door to the entry: Six raised-field panels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Door Trim</th>
<th>All single architraves with back band composed of a fillet, a cavetto and small half round moldings mitered at the corners, the same as in all south rooms of the house.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Wooden windows, unpainted with 12/16 lights installed in 1897. Muntins 7/8th inch with two quarter round moldings divided by a fillet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>Moldings, composed of a fillet, cavetto, and small half round dress, the sides of the window surround. Plain lintel. Shutters: unpainted original shutters, three have three panels and three have two panels. The three panel shutters were erroneously placed here after the 1897 restoration. They belong in Room 111.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>113: Door to Room 107: Suffolk latch (reproduction); previous Suffolk latch on door mounted higher. H hinges with foliate ends slightly different than others in the front part of the house. 115: North closet door, divided in three doors vertically, all with H hinges with foliate ends (probably original). 116: South closet door: H hinges with foliate ends (probably original). 117: Door to entry: Suffolk latch with evidence of several previous fittings on the door. H hinges with foliate ends (original) Shutters: Small H Hinges with foliate ends, probably original.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>Powell’s impressions were of a ‘crispy’ finish – either very few finish layers or stripping in the past. The overmantel in areas that might have been missed in stripping showed a grey coating – graining and the present paint coating. Inside the closet doors and at the baseboard showed similar layering. The closet door edges showed grey – present coat (no graining). A possible finish history: no finish – 18th c paint – paint stripping – grained finish – current finish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 31. Keeping room fireplace wall in 2007.

Figure 32. Keeping room fireplace wall in 1914, displaying part of the banner raised on the Lexington Green to welcome Lafayette in 1924. Frank Cousins photograph. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 109. Entry; stairhall, vestibule

The vestibule, also know as the stairhall, or lobby entry, was a feature of early New England architecture that allowed more privacy to family members than doors that allowed entry directly into the rooms of a house, and gave the family control of who would be admitted to the living spaces in the house. The ideas of privacy were an outgrowth of the Renaissance, and signaled a greater emphasis on the individual.\(^{135}\) The entry was also a vehicle for architectural display. The staircase trim was usually one of the most costly components of a Georgian building.

The Lexington Historical Society used the space initially to display architectural fragments associated with Thomas and John Hancock that had been given to the Society. Two brackets from Thomas Hancock’s Beacon Hill mansion and some paneling from the Brattle Square church that John Hancock attended were hung above the stairs.\(^{136}\) In 1969 the architectural elements were removed from the wall; the paneling was donated to SPNEA. At the same time the wallpaper was removed and the walls were painted white.\(^{137}\)

### Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>The front girt is partially visible below the ceiling. It may not be cased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards, painted brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>The plaster has the appearance of old. Since the plaster is flush with the door trim, however, the walls must have been given a second coat of plaster at some point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Plain baseboards four-and-three-quarters to five inches high flush with the current plaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornice</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Plaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>105: Front door: Six panels, flat on the interior and exterior with several small cyma moldings on the stiles and rails. This kind of door is typical of c. 1800, indicating that the front door was replaced around that time. 117: Door to Room 108: Six flat panels. 118: Door to Room 111: Six raised-field panels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Door Trim</td>
<td>Doors to Rooms 108 and 111 have single architraves similar to those throughout the front part of the house, with backband consisting of a fillet, a cavetto molding and a half round, mitered at the upper corners. Front door has plain boards with a bead at the inner edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Transom with four lights over the entry door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>Plain boards with bead at inner edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>Evidence of previous hardware on all doors 105: Front door: Reproduction Suffolk latch attached with screws, and reproduction HL hinges. 117: Door to the Room 108: Suffolk latch missing its thumb tab and reset. 118: Door to Room 111: Brass knob of c. 1800 and brass key hole fitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>No comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 33. Stairhall in 1934. Note architectural elements displayed on the north wall. Burr Church, Photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 110, main stair

The staircase, often a focal point of decorative display, is a good example of Georgian period trim. The features of the staircase, such as the cut out step ends, handrail moldings, and the crossed rails of the paneling of the soffit under the upper run of the stairs were frequently illustrated in English architectural books of the day.

There has been some question among those who have examined the house in the past year as to whether the balusters were part of the original staircase. Their turnings are not entirely typical and the wood with which they are made does not have the tight grain usually seen in balusters of the period (such as the balusters in the kitchen staircase). The fact that the balusters repeat in a narrower version the turning on the lower newel suggests that, despite some doubts, the balusters are probably original. The fact that the wide grain is so prominent and even somewhat raised may be the result of exposure for over two centuries to sunlight from the transom windows over the front door and the upstairs window. This makes the balusters look different from the other woodwork in the room not so directly exposed to sunlight.

Sarah Chandler says that the Clarke sisters told her that the balusters were of similar design to those in the secondary staircase at the Thomas Hancock mansion. This is not the case, however, as the Hancock mansion baluster has a different turning sequence.138

A description in 1874 highlighted the distinctive patina of the unpainted staircase:

> The staircase in the front hall has also remained innocent of paint, and is handsome enough for a church. Age has given the carved balusters and paneled casings a richness and depth of hue that scorns the application of any unnatural pigment.139

Miss Goddard indicated that the baseboards were added along the stairs in the early 1900s to protect the plaster from visitors who were constantly damaging it with their shoes.140

The two half-height cases in the north corners of the stairs do not contain posts, but conceal the first step back of the fireplace recesses in Rooms 108 and 111 that would otherwise intrude upon the space of the stairhall.

Building Element Description

| Framing | No framing visible. The half-height cases at the north corners of the stairs cover and conceal the first step back of the walls adjacent to the |

138 A baluster from the secondary staircase of the Thomas Hancock House is in the Architectural Fragments Collection of Historic New England.


140 Ibid., 40.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>Landings, treads and risers are of plain softwood boards painted brown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Plaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Baseboard on stairs was installed c. 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Features:</td>
<td>Staircase: the staircase contains all the elements typical of early Georgian staircases: raised-field paneling below the stairs and on the slanted soffit below the upper run of the stairs, cut out step ends of appropriate design, turned balusters, a turned lower newel post, square upper newel posts finished with acorn shaped drops at their lower ends, and a molded hand rail. Staircase appears to be entirely original.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 34. Detail of cut out step end of the Staircase in 2007.*
Figure 35. Staircase in 2007.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 111: Hancock-Adams Bedroom; Southwest Room, Parlor

The Hancock-Adams Bedroom has long been viewed as the most significant room in the Hancock-Clarke House because of its specific association with the events surrounding the beginning of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775. It was here that Samuel Adams and John Hancock were staying after they left Boston for their safety. It was here that Paul Revere delivered the message to them that His Majesty’s troops were approaching. The room’s historic status was firmly established by the nineteenth century when descriptions of it began to appear in print.

The room’s original appearance was carefully maintained by the Misses Clarke, daughters of Rev. Jonas Clarke, until their deaths in 1843 and 1844, thereby ensuring that the wallpaper installed c. 1740 survived and that the woodwork remained unpainted. Thereafter Joseph Eaton, owner from 1846 to 1875, made the room available to interested parties including thousands of visitors at the time of the Centennial celebration in 1875. In 1848, his welcome of Benson Lossing resulted in the first of numerous descriptions of the room published over the next four decades.141 Lossing said:

[The room] is retained in its original condition. The wainscoting is of Carolina pine [now disputed] and the sides of the room are all covered with a heavy paper, with dark figures, pasted upon the boards in rectangular pieces about fourteen inches square.142

After the Lexington Historical Society acquired the house in 1896, Clarke family furniture, the last of which had been dispersed in an auction in 1875, gradually returned to the house through gift or purchase, enhancing the room’s historical accuracy to the Revolutionary period. Recognition of the status of the room as an icon of the American Revolution was underscored in 1964 when a replica of the room was chosen to represent the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the DAR Museum in Washington DC.

Apart from its historical significance, the Hancock-Adams Bedroom is a distinguished and well-preserved example of early Georgian design in New England. As the best room in the house, the room was given the most elaborate treatment. The fireplace wall features raised field paneling surrounding a recessed chimney breast composed of two raised field overmantel panels and a firebox trimmed with a bolection molding. It is the recess of the fireplace and its trim behind the plane of the rest of the wall that marks this as an early example of Georgian woodwork. Later chimneybreasts were flush with the wall or projected in front of it. The recess is perhaps a holdover from similar practices in the previous post medieval period.

141 See excerpts of these descriptions in the Appendix.
Two pilasters set on high plinth bases flank the panels to the right of the fireplace, while at the ends of the wall are paneled doors. The casing of the doorway leading to the entry is a rare example of a bolection molded door architrave. This treatment, instead of the more common back band molding, is associated with the early Georgian period and is seen in other houses such as the Bellingham-Cary House in Chelsea. A cyma-molded cornice runs across the top of the fireplace wall, reiterating the changes in plane of the wall below. The fireplace wall and the other woodwork in the room remained unpainted throughout the nineteenth century, and, except for the shutters, received a single coat of a translucent finish in 1897, as its only treatment to date.

In keeping with Georgian design, beaded cases cover the posts and the small portion of the east and west girts visible below the ceiling. A distinguishing feature of the room is the fact that the summer beam and north and south girts, unlike in the room on the other side of the chimney, are
hidden above the ceiling. This was first assumed to be the result of a later alteration, reflecting the trend in the later eighteenth century toward concealing evidence of framing. However, probing above the plaster and lath ceiling revealed that the existing ceiling is original. The lath is attached to the bottoms of deep narrow joists (approximately eight-and-one-half inches by two inches), slightly deeper than the summer beam itself, and to shims placed below the summer beam. The shims allowed the plaster to key under the beam. Although deep joists were known to have been used in England from the late sixteenth century on, their use did not become common in New England until the late eighteenth century.143

Another rare feature of the Hancock-Adams room originally was the use of horizontal boards, instead of plaster, as a base for the application of wallpaper.144 The original wallpaper, removed from walls in the late nineteenth century, constitutes one of the earliest, if not the earliest known wallpaper application in New England in which fragments were found still associated with the room where the wallpaper was installed.

Figure 37. Deep joists and tie beam as seen in the attic.

Figure 38. Fragment of c. 1740 wallpaper from the Hancock-Adams Bedroom.
Lexington Historical Society Collection.

143 Daniel Miles, personal communication, December 8, 2006.
144 Richard Nylander, Chief Curator of Historic New England, is aware of one other possible example of the use of boards as a substrate for wallpaper, at the Hale House in Beverly.
Imported wallpapers were advertised for sale in Boston as early as 1700, and Thomas Hancock, Rev. Hancock’s son, was a leading dealer in wallpapers in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. According to Abbott Cummings, examination of the scraps of wallpaper that were salvaged from the room, or discovered under later baseboards, when compared to eighteenth century English papers “suggests a date as early as 1712 for these fragments, one of which bears an incomplete impression of an unusual Georgian excise stamp.”145 These observations certainly imply that Thomas Hancock supplied the wallpaper for his father’s house. The first description of the paper that has come down to us was by John Mascarene, who boarded with the Clarke Family for a time beginning in 1793.146 Mascarene wrote a poem about Clarke’s residence in 1794 in which he stated that the paper was green with a design of leaves and branches. 147 Mrs. Babcock, early tenant of the Brigham’s, is believed to have removed the original wallpaper in 1876.148 She applied a new paper to the boards subsequently. At some point, a layer of plaster was put over the boards. Plaster burn on the edge of the beam cases and a line on the floorboards, where the boards set forward in front of the plaster are indications that a layer of plaster thicker than the present drywall was on the walls at some point.

A little more than two decades later, a version of the original wallpaper was reproduced from the surviving fragments of the paper and placed on the walls of the room, making it one of the earliest, if not the earliest example of wallpaper reproduced for a specific space based on an original paper from the space.149 The reproduction paper, which remained on the walls until April 1973, was based on fragments of the original wallpaper that did not show a complete repeat. In addition, at the time that the replacement paper was designed, the belief was that individual sheets with a complete repeat of the design were pasted on walls separately. In reality, the individual sheets were glued together and sold in rolls so that the complete design need not be limited to a

146 Jonas Clarke Diary, August 17, 1793.
148 Notes on the reverse of a sample of the original wallpaper in the LHS Archives gives this date.
The colors chosen for the reproduction paper did not seem to reflect the rich greens of the original paper. The reproduction paper was applied over a layer of plaster that covered the walls at the time.

In 1963, a Lexington Historical Society representative wrote to Abbot Smith, president of the Strahan Wallpaper company, about replacing the deteriorated 1898 reproduction of the original wallpaper with a new version. Mr. Smith responded that reproducing the wallpaper from the old wood blocks would be impossible because only one of the blocks could be found.

In 1973, the reproduction wallpaper was apparently removed along with its plaster substrate. The current drywall was put in place over the boards.

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150 Ibid., 268.
All elements of the room are believed to be original except for the drywall covering the walls, the baseboards, and small electric lights at the chimneybreast, some hardware, and floorboards. (The minutes of the Lexington Historical Society Council refer repeatedly to repairs to floors in the house; this is understandable in a building that has received so many visitors over the years.

**Building Element Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing</th>
<th>Posts in the four corners of the room are enclosed in beaded cases. The cases that cover the girts on the east and west walls are just visible below the plaster ceiling. The summer beam and the north and south girts are concealed above the original plaster ceiling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards, painted dark brown. Many, if not all, of the boards have been replaced over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>South, west and north walls: modern drywall, covering horizontal boards to which the original wallpaper was once attached. East wall: An assemblage of raised field panels, pilasters, paneled doors and a recessed chimney breast covers the wall, all in natural softwood finished with one coat of varnish in 1896.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Different heights and different moldings profiles on different walls suggest that the baseboards date from several periods. South and west walls: 5 to 5 ¼ inches high with a cyma molding along the top. North wall: 4 inches high with a rounded top. The current baseboards replaced original baseboards that were approximately two inches high. The two-inch height at which the original baseboard stopped and original wallpaper fragments began was identified when the current baseboard was removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornice</td>
<td>No cornice, except as part of the fireplace wall trim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireplace/Firebox</td>
<td>A pronounced bolection molding, typical of the early Georgian period, surrounds the firebox. The firebox itself has probably been rebuilt along earlier lines in 1897 because the current bricks lack a buildup of soot. The bricks are laid in lime mortar with tooled joints. Tiles covering the bricks on the face of the fireplace feature biblical scenes complete with reference to the book of the Bible that they illustrate. These appear to be original to the room. They were mentioned in the 1860 description, which stated that “over the fireplace are tiles pictured with representations of Bible characters.” However, Rev. Staples asserted in 1896 that the “curious Dutch tiles around the fireplace in the room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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152 *Mt. Auburn Memorial*. March 14, 1860: 317. LHS Archives.
where Hancock and Adams were sleeping on the night of April 18, 1775 have been carried away, but scarcely any other changes have been made without and within since that day. Either the current tiles are replacements at the time of the restoration in 1897, or Rev. Staples was mistaken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mantelpiece/Chimneybreast</th>
<th>The chimneybreast features two overmantel panels in the classic arrangement of the period of construction, with the top panel larger than the bottom one. A molding above the top panel further embellished the chimneybreast.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>Two rows of square brick tiles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Doors                     | 118: South door: six raised-field panels.  
                           120: North door: three raised-field panels.                                                                                                               |
| Door Trim                 | 118: At south door: a bolection-molded architrave.  
                           120: At the north door: no trim.                                                                                                                                 |
| Windows                   | The current windows with twelve over sixteen lights date from 1897.                                                                                                             |
| Window Trim               | A backband composed of a fillet, a cavetto, and a small half round moldings dresses the side casing of the window. A similar molding below the sill is mitered to the side moldings. Unpainted paneled shutters are believed to date from the original construction, but were erroneously installed in 1897, so that some of the shutters have three panels and some have two. The three paneled shutters, some of which are found in the keeping room, belong in this most elaborate room in the house. |
| Hardware                  | 118: South door: H hinges with foliate ends that don’t appear to have been reset (original), and a box lock of c. 1800.  
                           120: North door: H hinges with foliate ends and a small box lock of c. 1800 missing its cover.  
                           Shutter hinges: small H hinges with foliate ends, some are probably original; others are likely replacements of 1897. |
| Paint                     | The woodwork appeared to have only one coat of a translucent finish that has alligatored. At the baseboards with cap, only one coat of finish was evident. At the beaded baseboard to the north, there were layers of The woodwork appeared to have only one coat of a translucent finish that has alligatored. At the baseboards with cap, only one coat of finish was evident. At the beaded baseboard to the north, there were layers of white – dark red oxide – current paint. The floor did not show the red layer as sampled. The remnants of buildup and unfinished areas confirmed other |

evidence showing a former board layer (papered as shown in Whipple slides 1973), then plaster. The plaster and boards were removed in 1973 and painted gypsum board installed. The south baseboard was reset. The interior shutters appeared to have remnants of a single translucent layer that was been worn away by light exposure.\footnote{154}
Room 201. North bedroom, children’s bedroom

The north bedroom in the ell must have served a variety of functions in the lifetime of the house. Surely, use as a bedroom was primary when the house had numerous occupants during the Clarke ownership. Although the inventory of the estate of Rev. Jonas Clarke does not list items room by room, no doubt some of the six minor bedsteads or two trundle beds were in this chamber.\(^{155}\) Storage is also a likely use of the room. Sarah Chandler referred to this room as “A quaint room with nice closet and fireplace.”\(^{156}\) The room was heated by a stove in the nineteenth century, as witnessed by the closed up stove pipe hole on the chimneybreast. When the house became a museum, the room was used for a variety of exhibits. In 1934 the room housed a loom, a cradle and farming tools. Since the 1970s, the room has been interpreted as a children’s bedroom.

### Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>Rafters of the lower slope of the gambrel roof in beaded cases project in front of the sloped plaster walls. The ties of the upper truss of the gambrel roof frame in beaded cases project below the plaster ceiling. Northernmost ceiling beam has bead only on south side, indicating that the fireplace might have extended farther south originally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards painted grey. A line of cut boards is found just east of the fireplace, and there are other unexplained cuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>South partition: vertical feather-edged paneling; some splitting where nails were removed when the wall was taken down during repairs to the summer beam below in 1975. North wall: Plaster on the west, a closed up fireplace with overmantel panel at the center and plain vertical paneling enclosing a closet on the east part of the wall. East and west walls: plaster on sawn wooden lath on the sloping walls, plaster on the short knee walls (i.e. mid-19th century or later).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Plain boards 3-inches high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Looks like dry wall applied below plaster on wooden lath visible in the attic above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireplace/Firebox</td>
<td>Fireplace now missing, just the mantel and closed-up firebox survive, as apparently the fireplace was removed in 1897. A bolection molding surrounds the previous location of the firebox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantelpiece/Chimneybreast</td>
<td>A single flat overmantel panel. A wooden cyma molded cornice runs across the top of the chimneybreast. A plain mantel shelf has a bed molding with the same profile. A closed up stove pipe hole is present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{155}\) Edwin B. Worthen, Jr., “Notes on the Clarke Inventory.” Worthen Collection, Cary Library.

\(^{156}\) Sarah Chandler, “Remembrances of the Hancock-Clarke House,” 1897. LHS Archives.
| Doors                  | 201: Door to north closet: Vertical feather-edged boards  
202: Door to south ell room: Two vertical feather-edged boards, with two battens on the reverse. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Door Trim</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Dormer windows with 6/9 lights. Windows have the same muntin profile as those in the rest of the house probably indicating installation in 1897.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>Simple window trim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hardware              | 201: Door to north closet: butterfly-shaped frame mount with strap extension  
202: Door to south ell room: Suffolk latch and h hinges with foliate ends. |
| Paint                 | Wood paneling and hinges show a thin white layer, red, and current paint. The mantel and the cased beams have darkened wood below, red and current finish with no under-layer of white. |
Figure 42. North kitchen chamber looking northwest in 2007.

Figure 43. North kitchen chamber in 1934. Burr Church, photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 202. South ell chamber

This room served as a passageway from the stairs to the adjacent second floor rooms and the attic, and very likely served as a bedroom and storage room at some points. Sarah Chandler remembers that there was a partition dividing the eastern part of the room from the western part in the early nineteenth century. The board across the ceiling marks the location of the partition and the threshold location can be seen on the floor. It is interesting to note that after years of apparently being whitewashed, the feather-edged sheathing on the north and south walls was painted a “very intense red,” likely in the second half of the nineteenth century. The room has featured a variety of exhibits since 1897.

Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>At the north end of the room, rafters of the lower slope of the gambrel roof project in beaded cases in front of the sloped plaster walls and the tie of the upper truss of the gambrel roof frame in a beaded case projects below the plaster ceiling. At the south end of the room, the rafters are uncased and unadorned. The rafters are birdmouthed over the plates at the floor level on either side. The plain tie of the upper truss is cut back by c. 4 inches to allow greater headroom above the door to the southeast chamber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards painted grey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Plaster and on the sloped walls and the knee walls below. Vertical paneling on the north wall is the reverse of the single board partition that divides the two ell chambers. On the south wall is horizontal feather edged paneling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>3 ½-inch-high plain boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Looks like dry wall applied below plaster on wooden lath visible in the attic above. On the ceiling just west of the door to the southeast chamber is a plain board that apparently marks the location of the partition mentioned by Sarah Chandler that divided the south ell on the second floor into a chamber and a vestibule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>202: door to north ell room: Vertical board door. 203: Door to attic: Vertical board door with wooden latch. 204: Door to Room 203: Six paneled door with flat panels on north side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door Trim</td>
<td>202: Door to north ell room: plain board architrave with bead at edge, mitered at the corners. 203: Door to attic: No trim. 204: Door to Room 203: No trim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Dormer windows with 6/9 lights. Windows have the same muntin profile as those in the rest of the house probably indicating installation in 1897.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>Plain trim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>202: Door to north ell room: Original H hinges with foliate ends and Suffolk latch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>203: Door to attic: wooden latch and butterfly shaped door frame mount with strap extensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>204: Door to Room 203: Suffolk latch (reproduction?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>At the horizontal wood paneling there were layers of a thin white (possibly whitewash), a ‘very intense red,” and the current finish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 203. Bedroom; southeast chamber; Rev. Clarke’s study

Sarah Chandler, born in 1819, in her 1897 remembrances of the Hancock-Clarke House that she visited many times as a girl, said that the Clarke sisters always referred to this room as Rev. Clarke’s study. The less formal of the two upstairs rooms and three feet narrower east to west, the room never-the-less shares with other rooms in the front part of the house the design of the doors, door architraves and window trim. The fireplace wall is plastered, and the fireplace, set within a recess and trimmed only with a bolection molding, and is the simplest in this part of the house. The deep joists of the ceiling frame made possible the concealing of the summer tie beam above the ceiling. The portion of the north and south plates of the front part of the house are exposed below the ceiling. These beams are not cased and are given a bead along the edge. This room communicates with the ell by a doorway of which the top 15 ½ inches are blocked off, it being above the ceiling of the lower ell.

Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>Splayed posts in beaded cases are found in the four corners of the room. The south and north plates of the front part of the house project several inches below the ceiling. They are uncased and decorated with a bead at the exposed edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards painted brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Plaster that looks old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Plain boards five inches high. Plaster covers the top molding, if any.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornice</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Plaster on metal lath installed in 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireplace/Firebox</td>
<td>The only trim of the fireplace here is a bolection molding around the firebox. The fireplace is recessed nine inches. Plain boards with a bead at the front edge finish the sides of he recess. Plain plaster finishes the space above the firebox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantelpiece/ chimneybreast</td>
<td>The simplest overmantel in the front part of the house: a plain plaster recess; wooden reveals have a small bead at the front edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>One-and-one half rows of square tiles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Doors            | 204: Door to ell: Door with six raised-field panels  
                    205: Door to closet north of fireplace: Three panel door  
                    206: Door to upstairs hall: Six panel door with raised fields on both sides |
**Door Trim**

Trim the same on all three doors: a single architrave like all others in the front part of the house (backband with fillet, cavetto and a small half round moldings)

**Windows**

12 over 16 lights installed in 1897

**Window Trim**

Plain sill and soffit; side trim consists of a fillet, broader than in some rooms, a cavetto molding and a small half round. Sills and soffits are plain. Shutters reproduced in 1897.

**Hardware**

204: Door to ell: H hinges with foliate ends  
205: Door to closet north of fireplace: H hinges with foliate ends  
206: Door to upstairs hall: Suffolk latch that replaced something earlier. Shutters: Reproduction small H hinges with foliate ends

**Paint**

There is evidence of only one previous coating on the woodwork.
Figure 46. Rev. Clarke’s study in 1934. Burr Church, photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Room 204. Upstairs Hall

The balustrade of the staircase dominates the upstairs hall. A row of closely set balusters under a handrail molded on both sides runs across the western two thirds of the space. The window, without shutter throws light directly on the balustrade. Photos taken in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century show the balusters to be shiny, like the other woodwork in the house, as a result of the single coat of translucent finish that was applied in 1897. It is likely that the sunlight has caused that finish to deteriorate and even raise the grain on the balusters.

The upstairs hall functioned as a passage and was not given the more forward looking lowered ceiling that is found in the adjoining chambers and the parlor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Element Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseboard</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cornice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ceiling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Door Trim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Windows</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Window Trim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hardware</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 47. Upper stairhall in 1914, looking west. Frank Cousins, photographer. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.
Room 205. Bedroom; Dorothy Quincy Room; southwest chamber

This room, like the parlor below, has specific associations with the events of the night of April 18th 1775. It was here that Dorothy Quincy, John Hancock’s fiancée, and her chaperone, John Hancock’s Aunt Lydia, were staying when the warning came of the approach of the troops. From the windows they watched the events unfold on the Battle Green.

Room 205 was the best chamber, more elaborately decorated and three feet larger east to west than the southeast chamber on the opposite side of the chimney. The large bolection molding that completely surrounds the fireplace recess is not known to the author of this report to have been used elsewhere. It is an elegant way of dressing a fireplace in the period when bolection moldings often surrounded fireplaces themselves.

By 1914, this room was fitted with display cases for historic clothing from the LHS collection. It was probably in the late 1960s or 1970s, when similar work was being done elsewhere in the house that the wallpaper and cases were removed and the walls were painted white like the ceiling.

Building Element Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing</th>
<th>Posts in splayed cases with beaded edges. North and south plates partially visible in beaded cases below the ceiling. Tie beam concealed above the ceiling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Wide softwood boards painted brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Plaster that appears early especially on the south wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseboard</td>
<td>Plain boards 5 ½ inches high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornice</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Original plaster on riven lath attached to deep joists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireplace/Firebox</td>
<td>Small firebox surrounded by a bolection molding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantelpiece/</td>
<td>Fireplace recess is surrounded by a bolection molding. Two raised-field overmantel panels of equal size form the overmantel trim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimneybreast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>One row of brick tiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>207: Six panel door with raised fields both sides 208: Three panel door with raised fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door Trim</td>
<td>Consistent with trim elsewhere in the house. Splayed post case makes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
installation of a complete architrave impossible, so the architraves on the doors are truncated on the post side.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windows</th>
<th>Same as elsewhere in the house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Window Trim</td>
<td>As in the parlor, the moldings dress the side casings of the windows extend below the sill and are mitered to an identical molding that run across the space below the sill. Shutter reproduced in 1897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hardware      | 207: Suffolk latch and H hinges that look original  
208: Wooden knob and H hinges  
Small reproduction H hinges on shutters |
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Attic

The well-preserved roof framing in the attic is composed a principal rafters and three common purlins per slope with a purlin at the ridge. This framing system was the most common way of framing a roof in eastern Massachusetts from the late 17th century on. Once carpenters discovered that the system required less joinery than the previously used system of principal and common rafters with a single principal purlin, and provided adequate support for a wood shingled roof, the new system was quickly adopted.

In the Hancock-Clarke House attic, the major timbers, rafters and tie beams, are softwood, while many of the purlins are oak. The mixture of hard and softwood framing is expected in the period of construction when oak supplies in the region were diminishing.

There is brick nogging in the gable ends and a window in each end. The 8 over 12 sash appears to date from the restoration in 1897. The floor is of wide softwood boards. There is no sub flooring.

The chimney stack in the attic shows signs of repointing with cement mortar, but some lime mortar is also apparent, suggesting that the interior stack was not rebuilt.

There are several piles of architectural fragments on the floor containing moldings and some timber fragments. Most are tied together with old looking rope. The source of these fragments is unknown except in the case of the westernmost pile, which is labeled as pieces having been removed after repairs in 1965.

There is also a pile of shutters. Such a pile of shutters is shown in photos of the attic taken by Henry Charles Dean in 1914, now in the Archives of Historic New England. Historic photographs show shutters on the house in the late 19th century, and accession books indicate that shutters from the house were given to the Society on several occasions. However, whether the shutters stored here were actually on the house, as opposed to on one of the other LHS museum houses, is uncertain.
Figure 49. Attic of the gabled part of the house in 2007.
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Utilities

Heat:
Before the house was moved in 1896, there is indication that coal stoves supplemented the fireplace heat in the house. This is based on the fact that Roland Robbins found coal dust in the cellar during the archaeological excavations of 1965, and on the evidence of closed up stove pipe holes in the kitchen and kitchen chamber. In 1897, apparently, the house received its first furnace. Now the house is heated by oil. Remnants of a hot water heat system are found in the house. A riser pipe and an old pressure tank associated with radiators is found in the closet north of the chimney in Room 205 (205.1).

Electricity:
Electricity was first installed in the house in 1897. The remains of what is apparently the original knob and tube wiring are still in the house. In 1950, the present small sconces with candle-like bulbs were installed in the house. They were made by Parker Reed (see Figure 107). Previous to that there were more elaborate sconces in the rooms of the house.

Plumbing:
No details as to when the house was first supplied with running water or toilet facilities, if any, has surfaced. However, a tile drain was excavated in 1965, indicating that before the move there was a drainage system. There was a water supply in Lexington from 1881 on. In 1937, the house was connected to the town sewer system.

Telephone:
A telephone was first installed in the house in 1917 as a safety measure in case of fire.

V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Paint

The c. 1840 oil painting of the Hancock-Clarke House shows the house to have been painted yellow ochre. Historic photographs indicate that the trim was painted a darker color in the late nineteenth century, in keeping with painting practices of the time. When first restored in 1897, the windows were painted a contrasting white; the house and trim were by then a uniform color. In 1932, notes on a photograph indicate that the house was painted a yellowish brown with “dark drab” doors.

In 1977, Dr. Judith Selwyn of SPNEA did paint research on the exterior walls. She found many layers of paint on the house, but felt that the “curry” color put on the house in 1970 was similar to the earliest layers. She noted that at a paint mine in Lexington yellow ochre paint was mined in the eighteenth century. Dr. Selwyn recommended stripping paint from the south and east walls of the house because the previous latex paint was deteriorating and blistering.

Brian Powell took a cursory look at the exterior paint in 2006 and found on both parts of the house, “early yellow ochre – a medium or light green – possibly a layer of another yellow ochre -- 3 layers of grey/brown including the present paint.”

On the interior, as previously stated, three of the four front rooms and the stair hall remained unpainted until receiving a single coat of a translucent finish in 1897. For the other rooms, Brian Powell’s specific paint observations for each room are given in the sections on individual rooms.

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161 Dr. Judith Selwyn, “Project Completion Report: Hancock-Clarke House Restoration project (Exterior Paint, Lexington Historical society”
V. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The hardware in the Hancock-Clarke House is easily identifiable as old. Among these are strap hinges with slightly “butterfly” shaped attachments to the doorframe in the ell chambers and the door from the study to the exterior. Paint scars show that these hinges were previously on several other doors.

H hinges with foliate ends are found in many places in the front part of the house. Except in the keeping room, the hinges were never painted over. Thus the characteristics of their design are clearly evident. The foliate ends are somewhat irregular and each hinge has two score marks next to the ends. The hinges have six holes for nails, and all but a few are attached with hand wrought nails. With no evidence of their having replaced earlier hinges, these hinges seem clearly original to the construction of the house. The small H hinges on the shutters are probably original except on the upstairs shutters, which were replaced in 1897.

Most of the doors in the house currently have Suffolk latches. Only a couple, such as the latch on the door from the study to the kitchen, may be original. The others appear to be reproductions from 1897. The distinguishing feature of these latches is that the ends of the handle where they attach to the door are of uniform thinness and many have beveled sides that would have been hard for an eighteenth century blacksmith to fashion. Many of these seem to have been stamped out by a machine. Also, the designs of the ends these latches where they are attached to the doors also are not the typical rounded triangular shape of 18th century Suffolk latches. For example on the door from Room 106 to Room 111, has a handle with trefoil shaped ends. Elsewhere are latch ends that have a v-cut along the sides. Where there are impressions or paint scars from the earlier latches on a door, the shape is more like the conventional early Suffolk latch shape. Many pieces of hardware are held in place by round-headed nails that surely date from 1897. Where hand-wrought nails survive, the hardware can be identified as original, but in some places the 1897 nails were used to reattach original hardware where the original wrought nails had failed.
Figure 52. Original latch, door between kitchen and study.

Figure 53. Trefoil-shaped latch, door between study with Room 111, c. 1897.

Figure 54. Latch with V-cut mount, c. 1897. Note evidence of previous latch on door.