

**HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY**  
**BUILDING AND STRUCTURES**  
 HIST-6 NEW 5 77

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106  
 (203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No. 161
UTM	:
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIPTION

1. BUILDING NAME (Common) <i>(Historic)</i>		Seward-Atwell House	
2. TOWN CITY	VILLAGE	COUNTY	
Durham		Middlesex	
3. STREET AND NUMBER (and or location)			
Sand Hill Road south side			
4. OWNER(S)			
Davis, Howard and Betsy <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private			
5. USE (Present)		<i>(Historic)</i>	
Residence		Residence	
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:	EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD	INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE	IF YES, EXPLAIN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	with permission
7. STYLE OF BUILDING			DATE OF CONSTRUCTION
Greek Revival			1750/1830
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten	<input type="checkbox"/> Stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: sandstone	
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood frame	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post and beam	<input type="checkbox"/> balloon	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry		<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel	
10. ROOF (Type)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input type="checkbox"/> Hip	<input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<i>(Material)</i>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> Tin	<input type="checkbox"/> Slate
<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Built up	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
11. NUMBER OF STORIES	APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS		
2 1/2	26' x 36'; 22' x 14'		
12. CONDITION (Structural) <i>(Exterior)</i>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		WHEN?	ALTERATIONS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			rebuilt brick chimney
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input type="checkbox"/> Garage	<input type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden	
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> Open land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood-land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Indus-trial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input type="checkbox"/> High building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS			

Built on the south side of Sand Hill Road, the Seward-Atwell House is prominently sited atop Sand Hill. Malt Brook is located just to the south of the lot, which is landscaped with large maples and evergreens. Some modern development has occurred in this neighborhood which developed around industrial activity along Malt Brook in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

DESCRIPTI Cont(ined)

The 2½ story, five-bay facade which faces west away from the road features a Greek Revival-style door surround with modest side pilasters topped with a simple entablature and projecting cornice. The gable ends feature large cornice returns and an eight-paned rectangular window. The single story eastern ell exhibits eyebrow windows characteristic of the Greek Revival style. Six-over-six sash are displayed throughout. A number of wooden outbuildings are found on the property.

18 ARCHITECT

BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

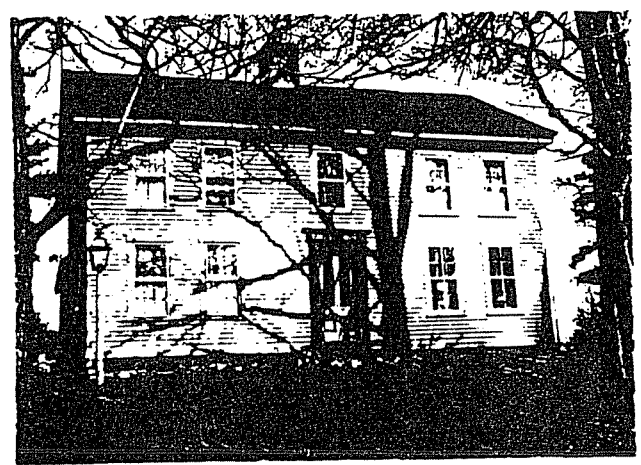
This building was originally constructed ca. 1750 as a 1½ story colonial-period, Cape-style dwelling which was encased within the present Greek Revival-style structure about 1830. The original frame found on the first floor of the building is post-and-beam, as is the later second-floor addition and eastern ell. Resting on a sandstone foundation, the clapboarded frame is capped by a wood-shingled gable roof.

Ephraim Seward (1700-1780) built the small dwelling house that underlies the present structure about 1750. The son of Durham's first settler, Caleb Seward, Ephraim was the "first white child" born in Durham. In 1752 Henry Crane bought the house along with "the cornmill standing on the brook with dam, tools, stocks, stones and implements that belong with mill" (DLR 5:164). Henry (1710-1768) sold the property to his brother-in-law Joseph Francis in May of 1752. Francis's first wife, Sarah (Buck), died shortly after their marriage in 1753, and he remarried Martha (Porter) in 1758. The next owner was Jonas Bishop, who purchased the dwelling and barn in 1769. Bishop (b. 1734) had married Francis's niece, Phebe Crane, in 1763 and was one of the men who listed for Nova Scotia in 1760. Upon moving to Guilford, Bishop sold the house to his son-in-law Jesse Atwell. Born to Jesse and Mary Atwell in 1769, Jesse Atwell, Jr. married Phebe Bishop (1772-1865) in 1790. Jesse, Jr. is recorded as being a farmer, tanner, and shoemaker. His tannery along Malt Brook was later owned by a Mr. Davenport, who manufactured axes. Jesse, Jr. served in the Revolutionary War on Long Island and in 1815 was commissioned a captain of the militia by Governor John Cotton Smith. In 1830 he served as a state (SEE CONT. SHEET)

SOURCES

Durham Land Records; Durham Vital Records; Middletown Probate Records; Federal Census of 1820, 1850, 1880; Beers, J. B., History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J. B. Beers & Co., 1884); Durham History Committee, Durham, CT, 1866-1980: Century of Change (Durham: 1980); Fowler, William C., History of Durham (Durham: W. C. Fowler, 1866); Whited, Milton, Durham's Heritage (Durham: 1976); 1859 Walling Map; 1974 Beers Atlas.

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER	DATE
	Alex Parades	4/84
VIEW	VIEW	NEGATIVE ON FILE
	east	10:20 (also 10:21)
COMPILED BY	NAME	DATE
	E. R. Hart	5/84
	ORGANIZATION	
	Greater Middletown Preservation Trust	
ADDRESS	27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457	



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

None known.     Highways     Vandalism     Developers     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal     Private     Deterioration     Zoning     Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM  
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY										
TOWN NO.:		SITE NO.:								
UTM: 18	/	---	/	---	/	---	/	1	6	1
QUAD:										
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL							POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 19 Date: 5/84

SEWARD-ATWELL HOUSE, Durham

19. continued

representative and as a justice of the peace in 1823 and 1824. The Atwells had ten children, five of whom died of dysentery between October 4 and 10, 1802. Upon Jesse's death in 1834 his two sons, George and Bishop, inherited the house. George quit-claimed his share to Bishop, who was responsible for building the present structure around the small homestead. Bishop, like his father, was a farmer, tanner, and shoemaker. He was Durham's first representative of the Know-Nothing Party and served as a state representative. In 1837 Bishop married Rachel Fowler, the daughter of Nathan and Chloe (Davis) Fowler. Bishop and Rachel had six children: Waldo F., Charles, John C, Emogene, Georgie, and Waldo R. In 1895 Bishop's two daughters inherited the property and owned it until 1905 when they sold it out of the family.

The transformation of the small Colonial-period Cape into a fine Greek Revival-style structure is "Yankee ingenuity" at its best. The Seward-Atwell House is historically significant for its association with many of Durham's founding families and the industrial development along Malt Brook.