

FORM B – BUILDING

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

C5/ 11/ 10/ /

Blue Hills

AVO.3

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

Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



View looking west from Main Street.

Address: 297 West Main Street

Historic Name: Isaac Beals House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1831

Source: Deed

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Wood Shingles / Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Italianate porches and bay window (mid-late 19th C); Replacement vinyl sash windows (late 20th C or early 21st C)

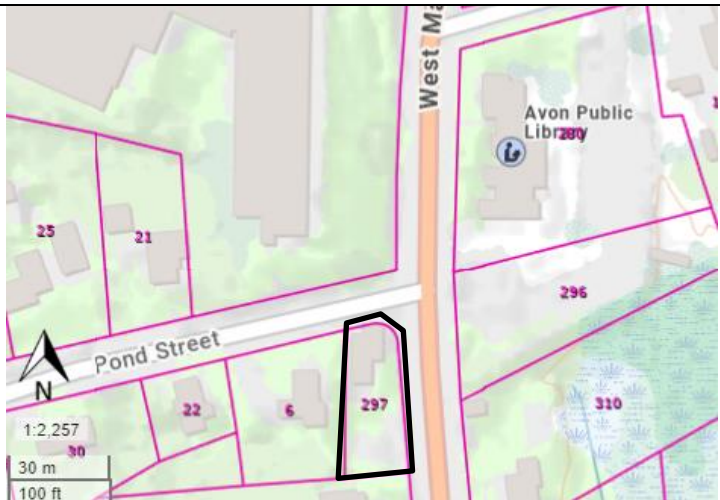
Condition: Fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.17

Setting: Located on a busy suburban road across the street from the Avon Middle-High School and the Avon Public Library. Houses are located to the west and south.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

297 WEST MAIN ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Located on a level corner lot, the house is oriented to the east toward West Main Street. An asphalt-paved parking area is located along West Main Street at the south end of the lot. The 1½-story frame house rests on a cut stone foundation and is capped with a side-gabled roof with overhanging eaves. A pair of slender brick chimneys with corbeled caps are located at the center of the roof ridge. The house is five bays wide and two bays deep with two windows in each gable peak. The symmetrical façade (east elevation) contains a center entrance containing a paneled wood door with an oval light in the top half. Half-height sidelights frame the entrance. The entrance is sheltered by a small frame porch supported by slender wood Doric columns. A bracketed compound cornice encircles the porch roof. A bay window with a bracketed cornice similar to that at the entrance is located on the south elevation. A 1½-story, side-gabled ell is attached to the southwest corner of the main block. A slender brick chimney with a corbeled cap is centered on the roof ridge. The ell is three bays wide and one bay deep. A shed-roof porch supported by slender, turned wood posts extends along the width of the ell's east elevation. A wall dormer is located on the east and west roof slopes. A 2-story projection along the house's rear elevation connects the ell to the main block. Windows throughout the house are vinyl sash replacements.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

297 West Main Street is reported to have been constructed in 1737 for Ashley Curtis.¹ In that year, Ashley Curtis and his brothers Edward, Theophilus, and William Curtis, purchased 24 acres of land in Stoughton from Edmund Quincy.² According to the deed, the brothers worked as "husbandmen," that is, farmers. Ashley Curtis was one of the five residents of East Stoughton who, unhappy with lack of services available in East Stoughton, petitioned the Selectmen in 1736 and 1737 to allow East Stoughton to become part of Bridgewater.³ (It would be another 152 years until East Stoughton would be separated from Stoughton to become Avon.)

It is more likely that the house was constructed circa 1831. In 1831, Isaac Beals (ca. 1783-1859) purchased the property, which included an "old house" and a "new house."⁴ The "old house" could have been the Ashley Curtis house. The building's current appearance does not provide clues that might substantiate a circa 1737 construction date. Interior inspections were beyond the scope of this survey, but a closer examination of surviving framing, floorplans, and interior features and finishes by an architectural historian with expertise in early Massachusetts building technology could provide additional insights into a likely original construction date and on the physical evolution of the building over time.

It does not appear that shoe manufacturer Isaac Beals made this his residence; census records place him at 558 West Main Street (AVO.104). In 1839, Isaac Beals sold the house to his brother, Ansel Beals (1794-1876)⁵, who lived there until his death.⁶ The purchase deed noted that Ansel Beals worked as a cordwainer (shoemaker). Beals married twice: to Caroline Britton

¹ Barbara Davey, MHC B Form AVO.3, 1978.

² Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Book 91, p. 237. Recorded 1758.

³ Hanna: 8, citing Massachusetts State Archives, Microfilm, Vol. 114, p. 212; 203-4.

⁴ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 94, p. 197 [386].

⁵ Findagrave.com Memorial #28610783. Accessed Oct. 3, 2022.

⁶ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 124, p. 81.

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(1805-1857) in 1843 and to Nancy Britton (1800-1888) in 1860. In 1878, Lydia Snell Beals (1835-), the wife of Ansel Beals' son, Adoniram J. Beals (1823-1894), purchased the property from her father-in-law's estate.⁷ Lydia Beals sold the property in 1904.⁸ Irish immigrants John McElaney, Jr. and his wife, Bridget, owned the property from 1904 until 1930.⁹ McElaney worked in a shoe factory, according to census records.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Walling, Henry Francis. *Map of Norfolk County, Mass.* Boston: Smith & Bumstead. 1858.



View looking southeast from Pond Street.

⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 506, p. 308.

⁸ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 978, p. 438.

⁹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1878, p. 383.