

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View looking northeast.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (month / year): December 2022

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

D4/ 8/ 7/ 1

Brockton

AVO.104

Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 558 West Main Street

Historic Name: Isaac and Betsy Beals House

Uses: Present: Multiple Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1806

Source: Deed

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Not visible

Wall/Trim: Vinyl siding / Vinyl trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Chimneys removed; Fenestration removed and entrance added; Porch added (late 19th C); Vinyl siding and replacement vinyl sash windows (late 20th C or early 21st C)

Condition: Poor

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.28

Setting: Located on a busy suburban thoroughfare. Surrounding houses date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

558 WEST MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

AVO.104

☐ 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 corner lot and very close to the street, the house is oriented to the west. An asphalt-paved driveway and parking area are located beside the house's south elevation. A narrow strip of lawn separates the house from the sidewalks. The 2-story frame house is capped with a hipped roof with overhanging eaves. A slender brick interior chimney is located on the north roof slope. The house is five bays wide and four bays deep. An off-center hipped-roof porch supported by turned wood columns shelters two metal entry doors added in the 20th century (likely when the building was converted to apartments). The façade fenestration, which now contains replacement vinyl sash, projects from the wall plane; fenestration on the side elevations is set flush with the wall plane.

While dramatically altered with the loss of original materials, the building retains its original Federal-style form and hipped roof. These Federal dwellings were popular in East Stoughton in the first decade of the 19th century. Similar houses are located at 196 East Main Street (AVO.104) and 227 East Main Street.

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.

558 West Main Street was likely constructed circa 1806, the year in which Isaac Beals purchased four acres here from his father-in-law William Holbrook,¹ and remained in the Beals family until 2002.² Isaac Beals (ca. 1783-1859) of Randolph married Betsy Holbrook (1784-1822) of Stoughton in 1804. Isaac Beals worked as a farmer and served in the War of 1812 as a musician in the Massachusetts Militia as part of Captain Stephen Tolman's company.³ Isaac Beals is reported to be the first or second East Stoughton resident to manufacture boots and shoes for commercial purposes.⁴ Beals began this operation in 1821 and later "formed a partnership with Simeon Drake."⁵ After Betsy Holbrook Beals' death, Isaac Beals remarried in 1823 to Submit Monk (ca. 1795-1880). Isaac Beals had at least ten children with his two wives.

The 1876 map identifies the house as the residence of "H. Clapp." Henry B. Clapp, a currier, married Isaac Beals' daughter, Mary. At the time of the 1870 census, Mary and Henry Clapp lived here with their family and Mary's mother Submit Monk Beals. The 1888 map identifies the house as the residence of "J. J. Beals."

In the 20th century, 558 West Main Street (identified at the time at 106 West Main Street) was the home of Isaac Beals' grandson, Wallace Monk Beals (1881-1936), his wife, Bertha, and their two daughters. In the 1920s, Wallace M. Beals worked as the superintendent of the Highland Park amusement park in Avon. Erma Beals Ballum (1907-2001), Wallace M. Beals' daughter, recollected in 1988 that several family members worked at the park. "Her grandmother worked in the restaurant and her mother sold tickets to the merry-go-round."⁶ Wallace M. Beals worked as a restaurant proprietor, and later, as a real estate salesman. The household included Wallace Beals' mother, Marcia, daughter Phyllis, her husband, Roger Washburn, and their

¹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 26, p. 257.

² Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 16061, p. 22.

³ Washington D.C.: National Archives. Index to War of 1812 Pension Application Files, 1960 - 1960. Microfilm publication M313, 102 rolls. NAID: 563315. Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 1773 - 2007, Record Group Number 15. National Archives at Washington, D.C. Accessed through Ancestry.com, October 8, 2022.

⁴ *Biographical Review*, p. 497 and Hurd: 353.

⁵ Hurd: 353.

⁶ Hanna: 94, citing 1988 interview with Erma Ballum.

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family, and daughter Erma Beals Ballum and her husband, Lawrence Ballum. Lawrence Ballum worked at the Doherty Brothers shoe factory and, later, at the Reservoir Dairy on South Street.⁷ Erma Beals Ballum worked as a bookkeeper at Bows Moccasin factory on East Spring Street.

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View looking southeast.

⁷ Hanna: 102.