

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

D6/ 7/ 3/ 1	Blue Hills		AVO.12
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Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



View looking northeast.

Address: 98 North Main Street

Historic Name: Blanchard Tavern; Avon Town House

Uses: Present: Museum

Original: Tavern, Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1784

Source: Keuhn

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboards / Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Roof altered to include overhanging eaves and gable-end cornice returns, corner pilasters added (mid-19th C); "Restoration" ca. 1975 included replacement windows and doors and addition of fan over entrance.

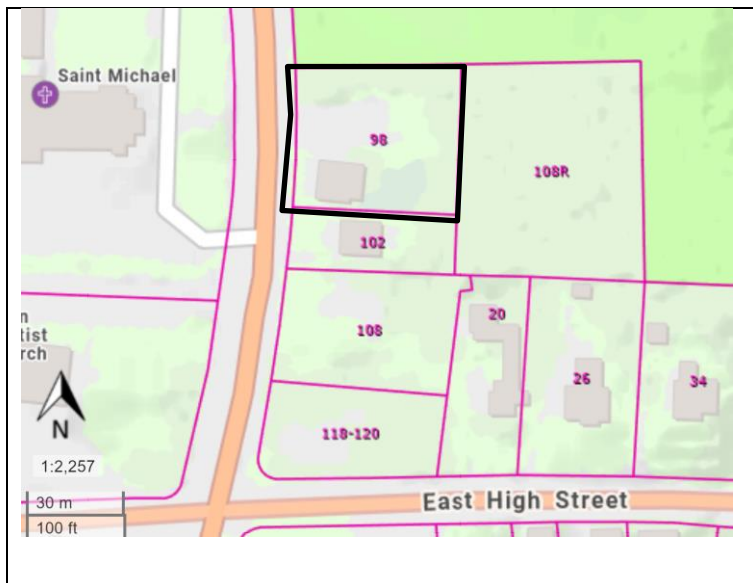
Condition: Fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.53

Setting: Located at a busy suburban intersection immediately north of Goeres Square. St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church (1962) and Avon Baptist Church (1840) are located across the street.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2022

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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.

The house is located on a level lot and oriented west, facing the street. A shallow front yard separates the house from the sidewalk. A small asphalt-paved parking lot is located in the northwest corner of the lot. A cut stone curb and step are located at the sidewalk. The house rests on a cut stone foundation and rises two stories to a side-gabled roof with overhanging eaves. A large brick chimney with a corbeled cap, located slightly-off-center, rises from the roof ridge. The symmetrical, five-bay frame house is covered with wood clapboards and trimmed with cornerboards and gable-end cornice returns. The compound cornice at the façade features a dentil course and a diaper-point course. The south elevation is three bays deep and the north elevation is two bays deep. The side elevations each contain a single window in the gable peak. On the façade, the pressed-panel metal center door is framed by half-height sidelights and fluted pilasters and capped with a segmental-arch fan detail. Sash windows throughout the house have 9/9 faux muntins (post-1938). Window casings project from the façade. Plastic, screw-on shutters flank the windows. A 1-story shed-roof ell extends the width of the rear elevation.

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.

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.

98 North Main Street is reported to have been in use circa 1784 as a tavern operated by William Blanchard.¹ Born in Braintree, William Blanchard (1747-1814)² served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Blanchard enlisted for three years and fought at Saratoga. Blanchard "suffered through the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge and later saw action at the Battle of Monmouth, where his cousin John died at his side. Before being discharged in February 1780, Blanchard fought once more, at Stony Point, New York."³ A little over a year after his return, Blanchard's wife, Rachel, died. Blanchard remarried in 1782 to Betsey Mann (1753-1833).⁴ William and Betty Blanchard were among the first members of Rev. Joel Briggs' Baptist church in East Stoughton. "By 1784, William Blanchard had finally settled his back pay for army service and became eligible for a small pension. With this money, he was able to purchase" 98 North Main Street.⁵ (Deed research has not been able to identify the purchase of the property by William Blanchard. Blanchard's occupation as an "innholder" is confirmed by a 1792 deed for property elsewhere in Stoughton.⁶ A 1797 deed for land purchased by Blanchard (that appears to be located on West Main Street) noted his occupation as "merchant."⁷ (More research is recommended.)

18th-century maps were consulted as part of this survey. The 1784 Bennett map of Stoughton depicts four taverns in Stoughton but does not include any buildings in present-day Avon. The 1794 "Plan of Stoughton" (see below) depicts a building near the present-day juncture of North Main Street and Main Street that is labelled "Blan____." More research is recommended.

¹ Helen M. Keuhn, "Blanchard's Tavern," MHC B Form AVO.12. Feb. 1980.

² Findagrave.com Memorial #70192813. Accessed Sept. 6, 2022.

³ Hanna: 21, citing *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*, Vol. II, 1896: 156.

⁴ Findagrave.com Memorial #70192562. Accessed Sept. 29, 2022.

⁵ Anonymous. "The Early Blanchards." <http://blanchardstavern.com>. Accessed Sept. 29, 2022.

⁶ Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Book 173, p. 146.

⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 8, p. 46.

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Deed Research undertaken in the early 20th century by Stoughton native Newton Talbot, a state legislator, a member of the Boston Board of Alderman, a member of the Tufts College board of trustees, and a founding member of the Stoughton Historical Society, identified 98 North Main Street as having been constructed in 1771 by John Bagley and owned by Samuel Blanchard in 1775.⁸ (John Bagley sold a 42-acre parcel in Braintree and Stoughton on the road to Braintree to Samuel Blanchard in 1771. The parcel included a house and a barn. However, Samuel Blanchard sold the same property on the same day to Amos Binney.⁹ More research is recommended.)

The building was reportedly in use as a tavern or store until the mid-19th century, when it was returned to residential use. At the time of the 1865 Massachusetts census, the house was the residence of farmer Isaac Gardner Blanchard (1790–1868)¹⁰ and his wife, Eunice Beal Blanchard (1790–1867).¹¹ (Isaac Gardner Blanchard was the grandson of Samuel Blanchard.) The couple were married in 1809 and had six children, all of whom became prominent Stoughton manufacturers and landowners. In 1868, Isaac G. Blanchard sold the house, which he identified as his “homestead,” to his son, Nathan Blanchard (1820–1897).¹² The property was sold several times over the next two decades before being purchased by David Henry Blanchard, grandson of Isaac and Eunice Blanchard.¹³ David H. Blanchard served the Seventh Norfolk District in the state legislature and had a large estate next door on North Main Street (now the site of DeMarco Park.) Upon his death, the property was bequeathed to his son, Henry L. Blanchard, more commonly known as H. Lawton Blanchard (1870–1945).¹⁴

In 1938, H. Lawton Blanchard gave the property to the town of Avon for use as a town hall and library.¹⁵ The deed was accepted at the March 1938 annual town meeting. H. Lawton Blanchard also donated the Robbins House at 188 Main Street to the town and donated the funds to build the 1948 town library on West Main Street. Avon moved the town hall to its present-day location in 1975. At that time, the Blanchard Trust purchased 98 North Main Street from the town and restored it to resemble a colonial tavern.¹⁶ The building was operated as a restaurant run by volunteers. The restaurant operation ceased in 2013.

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⁸ <https://stoughtonhistory.com/1775map.htm>. Accessed Sept. 29, 2022.

⁹ Suffolk County Registry of Deeds Book 119, pp. 61-62.

¹⁰ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108696034/isaac-gardner-blanchard>. Accessed Sept. 29, 2022.

¹¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108696035/eunice-blanchard>. Accessed Sept. 29, 2022.

¹² Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 365, p. 590.

¹³ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 560, p. 428.

¹⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108696010/henry-lawton-blanchard>. Accessed Dec. 31, 2022.

¹⁵ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 2183, p. 341.

¹⁶ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 5178, p. 232.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



View looking southeast.



View looking east, showing curb detail and entrance.

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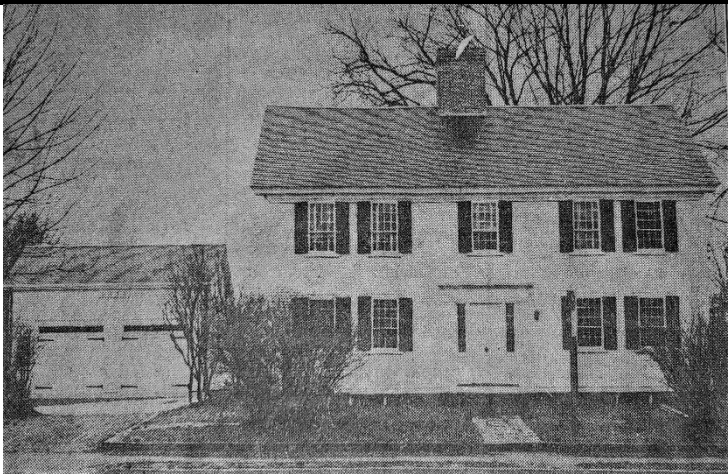
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1938 newspaper clipping. Source: "House in Avon Given Town by H. Lawton Blanchard." *Taunton Daily Enterprise*. 17 March 1938. Noyes Scrapbook, Robbins House Collection.



Detail, 1794 Plan of Stoughton.