

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

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PART II (PORTION)

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ADAM Z

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION ON

ADAMS MANSION 1730 HOUSE

Adams National Historic Site
Quincy, Massachusetts

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Washington Service Center--Design and Construction

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PART II (PORTION)

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ON

ADAMS MANSION

1730 House

Adams National Historic Site

Prepared by
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Architect
June 1966

for

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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ON

Adams Mansion

1730 House

Adams National Historic Site

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent

Date _____

Chief, PSCDC

Date _____

Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

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I. FOREWORD

This Part II, Architectural Data Section, of the 1730 House part of the Adams Mansion follows those previously submitted on the East Wing, the 1869 Addition and the Kitchen Wing. There remains only the report on the 1836 Passageway to complete the entire Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data Section, on the Adams Mansion.

The approach used in this report has been covered thoroughly in other sections and will not be reported here. It will be noted that a certain amount of exploratory work remains to be done on the 1730 House. It was not done prior to the submission of this report for a variety of reasons chief among which were the desirability of leaving the south front of the house undisturbed during the period when the house was open to the public since other parts of the house were closed and the limitations of time imposed by the author's resignation from the National Park Service.

The report covers as thoroughly as possible the changes which have taken place in the surface fabric of the house since the close of the historic period at Brooks Adams' death in 1927. Most of these changes were, unfortunately, made under the aegis of the government. For example, almost

ii.

all the wood trim in the house was repainted in the 1950's in colors quite noticeably different from the colors in use at the close of the historic period. The same holds true for the painted plaster walls. Also, the paint was removed from several floors which were painted all through the historic period, and several floors which had never had any paint on them have recently been painted. While any one change might not be considered too important in itself, taken altogether the changes add up to something substantial indeed. Fortunately, most of them can be corrected so that the house can resume its proper historic appearance. What has happened at the Adams Mansion shows how rapidly the authentic and valuable historic fabric of a house can be changed and disappear when personal taste and expediency, rather than principle, are allowed to govern most of what is done to the house. It is to be hoped that the principle of adhering to the given historic cut-off date will be followed in the future.

George L. Wrenn, III
Architect
June, 1966

II. HISTORY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE

The exact date of construction of the original main block of the house built by Leonard Vassall is not known. What documentary evidence there is suggests that it was probably built in 1730. Vassall bought the property in March of 1730 from Thomas Crosby. On March 15, 1731, he petitioned the town of Braintree for "the liberty of altering the road against his House for his conveniency"¹ and received permission to so do. The fact that, because of weather conditions, the actual construction of the house would have taken place in the spring, summer or autumn rather than in the winter and that the petition to alter the road "against his House" was made in the late winter of 1731 argues that the house itself was built in the spring, summer or fall of 1730 after he bought the property rather than during the winter of 1731 itself.²

This original section of the house consisted of one room on each side of a central stair hall at both the first and second floor levels and, above these, a garret (see Drawings, Illustration Nos. 23, 24, 25, 26). There was a basement under

¹
Braintree Town Records, Randolph, 1886, pp. 142-143. For fuller coverage of this documentary evidence see Historic Structures Reports, Part I, Historical and Architectural Data Sections.

The east end of the house but not under the west end or stair hall. The wood frame structure was contained between brick end walls at which were located the chimneys and fireplaces and in which, with one minor exception, there were no openings.

Fortunately the general appearance of the house as it was built is known to us through a drawing made in 1798 by E. Malcom of New York which was intended to show the house as it was in 1787 when John Adams purchased it from Leonard Vassall Borland (see Illustration No. 1). Although it is known that two additions had been built to the north of the house between 1730 and 1787, these are not visible in the drawing which shows the south and east walls. It is interesting to note that, while

2

It was not customary in that period to erect frame houses in the winter because of the bad weather. As an example, the foundations of the East Wing were built in October and November of 1799, but the frame was not raised until April, 1800. The windows, etc., were prefabricated during the winter months.

It is, of course, possible that Vassall was speaking prospectively about a house to be built in that year, or even later, when he petitioned the town and that, in the meantime, he occupied the house which had been on the property when he bought it (see Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data Section, Kitchen Wing). This doesn't seem likely, however, both because of the wording of the petition and because of the vigor with which Vassall customarily pursued his other projects. For instance, he had acquired a lot in Boston in March of 1727 and built a house in the same year and he acquired a number of lots in Braintree in quite a short space of time after he began buying in March of 1730.

the main architectural features of the original structure have been preserved through all the additions up to the present day, a number of changes have been made which have altered the appearance of the 1730 House (see Illustration No. 2). Some of these changes were made as a result of alterations to the original plan of the house. A brief description of the significant changes follows.

The portico along the south front was built by Abigail Adams in 1800 and remodelled by Charles Francis Adams in 1855. It tied in the 1730 part of the house and the East Wing and required the elimination of the arch over the original (west) front doorway. The construction of the East Wing also resulted in the replacement, apparently for reasons of symmetry, of the arch on the original central dormer with a gable to match its four companions. Elimination of the four half windows which had provided light for the original closets on either side of each chimney breast came about when, at various times and for various reasons, the closets were removed.³ The wood shingles on the roof were replaced

3

As can be seen, one window remains though it is blocked up inside. Specific reasons for this and for the removal of the windows will be covered as each room is discussed in turn.

by slate in 1869 and, at the same time, the rail, which had been extended over other, later built, sections of the house, was removed.

While the original appearance of the south, east and west walls of the 1730 House is pretty well established, that of the north wall is not. It is known that it was a clapboarded frame wall because clapboards were found still in place on the north girt in the course of investigating the structure (see Illustration No. 3).⁴ While the location of the openings is not known it is possible that some of the doorways now in the wall were put through where the original north windows had been. In general, this would mean that there was one north window in each room on each of the first two floors. There probably were two dormers on the north roof and there probably was a doorway to the outside behind the central stair hall. It is also likely that there was a direct entry to the basement under the present dining room in the same location as the present entry.

4

It was the existence of these clapboards which proved that the north wall was an exterior wall and that, therefore, the original kitchen must have been in a building separate from the house, rather than in a structure adjacent to it.

The general interior plan of the original house built by Leonard Vassall has already been described. It was not a large house considering that he had quite a large family and that there might have been as many as eight children in the house at one time (though probably not for a long stretch). The servants (with the possible exception of a nurse) presumably slept in an outbuilding, possibly over the kitchen.

The first change made to the original house was the addition, about 1750, of a small 3-story wing to the north which contained a kitchen below and chambers above. The main effect of this wing on the original structure was to enclose the exterior openings on the western half of the north wall. It also caused the replacement of the western section of the original north roof by an interior wall in the same place as the original north exterior walls below it. The further addition expanding the kitchen to the north, which was built about 1760, had no direct effect on the original part of the house, and, in 1787, the house looked as Malcom portrayed it in his drawing.

The construction of the East Wing in 1799-1800 enclosed the original east wall of the 1730 House. This had been a brick wall on top of a stone foundation with only one small

5
window near the north end. Openings were broken through near the north end of this wall at all three levels to provide access between the two sections of the house.

In 1836 the remaining exposed section of the original north wall of the house was enclosed by the construction of a 2-story passageway which linked the Kitchen Wing and the East Wing directly.⁶ This left only the south and west walls of the 1730 House exposed as they remain today.

5
A small section of this wall at foundation level was seen when some of the wood trim and plaster were removed from the west side of the first floor hallway of the East Wing in the course of structural work on that wing. The brick was not painted as it now is on the west wall, but the water table was similar to that still in place on the west wall (see Illustration No. 4). It was also possible to see the window opening still in place.

6
This passageway will be the subject of the final portion of the Historic Structures Report.

III. THE STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The structural framework of the 1730 House is of the basic post-and-beam construction common in the eighteenth century. Variations are introduced by the brick end walls and by the different framing methods used on different stories.

The first floor is framed by six major timbers which run north-south and are supported by the north and south stone foundation walls (see Drawing, Illustration No. 27). These timbers are of quite different sizes ranging from $10\frac{1}{2}" \times 11\frac{1}{2}"$ to $8\frac{1}{4}" \times 6\frac{1}{4}"$ and divide the space into seven bays each of about 7'-0" in width. The two outer bays are bordered on their outer sides by the brick end walls rather than by timbers. $2\frac{1}{2}" \times 3\frac{3}{4}"$ joists running east-west are framed into the major timbers and in the westernmost bay into the masonry end wall.

Before describing the condition of the first floor framing and making recommendations for its reinforcement I will briefly describe the framing of the second and third floors.

7

The stone foundations on the eastern end have been built out to the face of the chimney breast and under part of the easternmost timber. This may have been done in 1799 when they were frightened of the effect the excavations for the East Wing basement on the other side of the wall might have on the dry laid stone foundations.

Each side of the stair hall on the second floor is framed by
⁸
 major timbers in the form of an H. The two sides run north-south and frame into 2-story posts of which there are eight, and the cross-bar runs east-west and frames into the center of each north-south timber. Girts span the north and south walls and receive the joists within the H's which run north-south into the cross-bar. East-west joists span the stair hall where it is not open and also the end bays between the outer side of each H and the brick end walls.

The framing on the third floor is similar to that on the first floor with six major c. 8" x 8" timbers running north-south which divide the area into seven bays and c. 3" x 4" joists running east-west which span the bays. The major timbers which frame the roof are tied into the major timbers of the third floor framing (see Illustration No. 5).

The framing of the 1730 House forms a unit separate from the framing of other parts of the house except along the north wall where the girt and plate were joined by wood and iron pins to

Because of the desirability of keeping some parts of the house open to the public while other parts were being explored and worked on there has been no chance to open up the structure on the second floor and the exact size of the framing members is not known. Sketches showing the probable framing plans of the second and third floors are on file at the site.

the girt and plate of the first addition to the house which
⁹
 formed the attached kitchen. No basic changes have been made
 in the framing since construction. As has been mentioned, when
 the Kitchen Wing was built part of the north side of the gambrel
 roof was removed, but the 1730 roof timber was left in place
 (see Illustration No. 6).

Of historic architectural interest is the apparent
 re-use in the first floor framing of decorated timbers from an
¹⁰
 earlier building, perhaps the Spear-Crosby House which had
 stood on the property when Vassall acquired it. These timbers
 with chamfer and lamb's tongue decoration are typical of the 17th
 century. Care should be taken to preserve them in the course of
 any structural work in the area.

With the major exception of the framing under the
 panelled room, the stair hall and the staircase, the structural
 framework of the 1730 House is apparently not in bad condition and
 does not need reinforcement except where crowds of tourists are
 apt to increase the load on the framing beyond what it was
 intended to bear. Tourists are not permitted in the rooms or

9

See Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data
 Section, Kitchen Wing.

10

For a photograph of these timbers see Historic Structures
 Report, Part I, Architectural Data Section, Illustration No. 18

stair halls on either the second or third stories so no structural work need be done on those levels.¹¹ The first floor framing should be reinforced, however. As previously mentioned, the framing under the panelled room is in very poor condition (see Illustration No. 7). Tourists are not allowed in the room, but in places it is dangerous even for the small groups of special visitors who might be permitted entry. All tourists enter the house through the 1730 front door and so a large group may gather in the front hall. They then proceed along the south side of the dining room into the East Wing. The framing of the hall and the dining room should, therefore, be reinforced.¹² The framing of the first run and landing of the 1730 stairs is also in very poor condition and its reinforcement should be undertaken at the same time. When this latter work is done care must be taken to

11

The route which the tourists take through the house is determined both from the point of view of the most efficient handling of crowds and with the desire of keeping the people out of the rooms if it is at all possible. Tourists are able to see the 1730 rooms on the second floor from adjacent hallways. They are not taken to the third floor at all.

12

The shoring installed under the dining room by the National Park Service in the late 1940's is in good condition, and consideration should be given to retaining it and adding any reinforcement that seems necessary.

11.

preserve in place the initials TBA (Thomas Boylston Adams)
written on the back of one of the risers (see Illustration No. 8).¹³

Throughout the first floor of the 1730 House it is recommended that the original framing be left in place and reinforced from below so that no floor boards have to be taken up. A system of supplementary wood joists, steel channels and lally columns similar to that used in the East Wing should accomplish the reinforcement with minimum disturbance above. This structural work would make the first floor framing strong enough to do the job it is now called on to do.

13

This Thomas Boylston Adams was either the son of John and Abigail or their grandson by that son. The first TBA would have been about 13 years old when the Adamses moved into the house; his son would have been about 9 years old when his parents took up long-term residence.

IV. THE NON-STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS, THEIR CONDITION AND REHABILITATION

The rehabilitation of the non-structural elements which cover the framework, both outside and in, should be undertaken after the structural work has been completed. The approach to this work as well as to the structural work has been covered in other sections of the Part II report and will not be repeated here. The history, as well as the condition and rehabilitation of the various elements of the surface fabric, will be discussed in the following pages.

A. Exterior

The 1730 House has two exterior walls. The one on the west is of masonry construction, brick on stone foundations; the one on the south is of wood frame construction. In 1730 the west wall had no openings in it, and this was still the case in 1787 when John Adams bought the house. One of the first changes made by the Adamses even before they moved into the house was to have windows cut in the west wall at the first floor level. This was first suggested by Cotton Tufts who was supervising the repairs to the house while the Adamses were in London, and it was taken up by Abigail who thought that "making the two windows into the

garden would dispell much of the gloom" in the mahogany room.

Two matching window openings were cut at second floor level in 1792 when Abigail wrote Cotton Tufts that Mr. Adams wished him "to engage Mr. Lund to make and have ready by Spring two sashes
15
for to make windows from my chamber."

Other minor changes in the appearance of the west wall
16
include the addition of the lightning rod and of another flue
17
in the chimney (see Illustration Nos. 2, 9). In the 1950's a small opening was cut through the stone foundation to allow circulation of air in the newly excavated crawl space under the panelled room. There is a small amount of painting to be done on the wall and, at the completion of the project, it should be painted to match existing colors when the rest of the house is painted.

14

Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, London, November 6, 1787

15

Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, Philadelphia, December 18, 1791.

16

Lightning rods were attached to both the east and west end of the house by John Adams, apparently in the early 1820's. Care should be taken to keep the large wisteria which grows on the west rod from going around the corners onto the south wall.

17

The 1849 daguerreotype shows only two flues in the chimney, and the style of the mantelpiece in the third floor west chamber is of the mid-19th century.

The south exterior wall of the 1730 House has been altered in appearance considerably since construction. The first major alteration, as previously mentioned, was the addition of a portico in 1800 when the East Wing was built. This necessitated the elimination of the round arch over the doorway.¹⁸ At the same time the round-arched dormer which had formerly been in the central position was changed and the two half-windows at the east end of the wall were made into full size windows. The half-windows at the west end remained even when the closets which they had formerly lighted were removed (see Illustration No. 9). The lower of the windows was removed and the exterior wall clapboarded probably in 1851 when Charles Francis Adams had the mahogany panelling restored to its original appearance (see Illustration No. 10). The upper window is still in place on the outside though it is plastered over on the inside.

18

For more information on the doorway see Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural Data Section, Illustration No. 15.

Paint was removed from the clapboards on the south wall in the 1950's. A few clapboards may have been replaced at that time. For the most part, the clapboards are in reasonably good condition. The few that have bowed away from the wall should be refastened or replaced if necessary, and care should be taken to maintain the pattern of the old clapboards. The porch was rebuilt in the 1950's and is in good condition.¹⁹ There has been no investigation of the condition of the sill along the south wall because the writing of this report coincided with the opening of the house for the year, and it was thought best to let the investigation go until shortly before the actual structural work was done in order that the front of the house should present a good appearance to the public.²⁰

19

The front posts were cut down in size at that time in order to lower the level of the front of the porch roof and promote drainage away from the building.

20

Work on the house was undertaken in sections at the Superintendent's request in order that some of the house could be kept open to the public at all times during the season. The lack of any place to put what had to be moved, the necessity of protecting and preserving sections still open and the difficulty of studying sections still open have considerably delayed the job. Closing of the whole house and the storage of all the furniture would have expedited the work considerably.

Other work on the exterior includes the replacement²¹ of the shutters now in place by the originals and the repainting of the exterior woodwork and masonry when the job is completed.

B. Interior

Some of the interior surface fabric of the 1730 House is very old and some of it is of quite recent origin. Without regard to its age its condition varies from good to quite poor. The history of the fabric as far as it is known, as well as its condition and recommendations for any necessary rehabilitation, will be included in the following pages.

21

The original shutters were removed and replaced by new ones in the 1950's. Shutters were first put on the building in 1801 having been ordered by Abigail Adams in 1800. From the style of the shutters and comparison with early photographs, as well as the number of layers of paint found and the earlier repairs which came to light when the paint was removed, it seems quite certain that a number of the shutters on the house dated back to 1801. Others, of course, were later, having been put on as later additions were built. Unfortunately, at the time no thought was given to the loss of authenticity in replacing the original with the new or to matching the new with the old. As a result, many of the new pairs look conspicuously different from the originals and have a very modern feeling. The paint has been removed from the originals so that their condition could be determined. Some needed no repair those that did are in process of being repaired by Gilman Jackson, Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, Mass. According to the Superintendent much of the original shutter hardware was reused when the modern shutters were installed. It should be reused again when the originals are put back on.

1. First Floor

The plan of the first floor of the 1730 House, two rooms on either side of a central stair hall, has not been changed since construction of the house. The appearance of these spaces, however, has been changed in varying degrees since that time. The room to the west of the stair hall is known as the mahogany panelled room. For a long time it was thought that the mahogany panelling was original to the room, but careful investigation has proved that this was not the case. During the dry winter months when the wood of the panels shrinks plaster can be seen on the walls behind it. It was possible to obtain a piece of this plaster by cutting through the plaster on the south wall of the pan closet in the Kitchen Wing which lies directly north of the panelled room (see Illustration No. 11 & Drawing, Illustration No. 24). The plaster which came from behind the panelling was examined with great care under a microscope, and three layers of finished surface which had been exposed long enough to discolor

22

were found. In order to come to a reasonable conclusion as to how long this plaster surface might have been exposed before the panelling was installed, it is necessary to correlate the architectural information with the historical.²³ Leonard Vassall built the house in 1730 as a summer place for himself and his family; we know that he did not install the panelling when the house was built. He continued to use it as a summer place until his death in Boston in June of 1737. This gave him six summers of occupancy, and it seems highly unlikely that in that time he added both two coats of whitewash to the walls and the mahogany panelling as well. It is not known how much use his widow gave the property after her remarriage in the winter of 1738, but, in any case, the property passed out of

22

The examination of the plaster specimen was done by Architect Penelope Hartshorne of EODC, Philadelphia. Her report on the layering was as follows:

Layering: plaster ground coat
 plaster finish coat--or finish coat with white
 whitewash
 light surface discoloration
 white whitewash
 gray surface dirt and discoloration

A specimen of this plaster along with Architect Hartshorne's report is on file at the Adams National Historic Site.

23

For more detailed information on the Vassall-Borland family see Historic Structures Report, Part I, Historical Data Section, Chapter 2.

her hands at that time under the provisions of Vassall's will. It seems unlikely that she would have installed the mahogany panelling in a house which she did not own. Her daughter, Anna, received title to the property on her mother's remarriage and actually took possession on her own marriage to John Borland in February of 1749 shortly before her fourteenth birthday. At that time she was quite well off, and her husband came from a well-to-do family. It is known that in the course of their year-round occupancy of the house they added, in two sections, a kitchen wing to the house,²⁴ and it seems reasonable to suppose that they, also, at some time between 1749, when they moved in, and when they moved to Cambridge, had the mahogany panelling installed. It is difficult to pinpoint the date of installation any further though, perhaps, in view of there being only three layers of exposed surface on the plaster, it was done earlier rather than later.²⁵

24

For the history of the Borlands' additions to the house see Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data Section, portion on the Kitchen Wing.

25

It is interesting to note that Charles E. Peterson in his Part I, Architectural Data Section, questioned the 1730 dating of the panelling on stylistic grounds. The bolelection moulding surrounding the fireplace is considerably less heavy than those in the chambers on the second floor which are more typical of the earlier part of the century.

Abigail Adams had the mahogany painted white, albeit
 26
 apparently with some reluctance. Charles Francis Adams had
 the paint removed in 1851. He also had the half-window removed
 which had been left in place when the closets were taken out
 and the west windows put through by Abigail in 1788. This
 necessitated the installation of an additional panel of mahogany
 where the window had been. Architectural evidence indicates
 that the mahogany which makes up the three sides of the alcoves
 where the closets had been was also installed by Charles Francis
 27
 Adams, and he put the mirror in place of a panel between the

26

For more detailed history of the thoughts about and
 treatment of the panelling by Abigail and Charles Francis Adams,
 see Historic Structures Report, Part I, Historical Data Section,
 Chapter VI.

27

The rails are not fastened to the stiles by the conventional
 eighteenth century mortise, tenon and peg method, and the
 cornices on the north and south walls are cut to fit to the
 cornice on the west side of the cross beam. This later
 installation of these sections of panelling raises the question
 of what treatment had been given these alcoves during that
 period after the closets had been removed but before Charles
 Francis Adams removed the paint. The most likely possibilities
 are either that panelling, probably of pine, was installed and
 painted or that the walls were left plastered as they had been
 when the closets were in place.

windows on the south wall. The panelling has been kept in
 28
 excellent condition and needs no work.

The ceiling has a texture which appears to come from whitewash. In the southwest corner it has been marred by something splattered on it which should be cleaned off if possible. If it proves to be impossible a new coat of whitewash mixed according to the old formula should be applied. Modern ceiling paint should not be used. The floor boards are in good condition, and, if possible, should not be disturbed in the course of structural work.

As a matter of historic interest it should be noted that this is one of the floors on which Abigail Adams may have put down her "oil cloth". Brooks Adams put down straw matting for his mother on this and other floors throughout parts of the house used by the family. Oriental rugs were placed on top of the matting and the effect of the whole was somewhat different from the present effect (see Illustration No. 12). The matting

Brooks Adams, also, had work done on the panelling. In a letter written to his brother, Henry, on April 15, 1906, he said, ". . . we have got the Panelled Room, I do really think, magnificent. The mahogany is like velvet, . . ."

was retained on the floor by the Adams Memorial Society when it opened the house to the public between 1927 and 1946, but was removed by the National Park Service in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Its restoration at some future time in all the rooms from which it was removed in order that the house should look as it did during the historic period when the Adamses were in residence should be considered.

The dining room has undergone a more drastic change in appearance over the course of the years than any other room in the 1730 House. Its present appearance is a combination of the work of Charles Francis Adams and Brooks Adams. When the Adamses bought the house in 1787 there was a closet on each side of the chimney breast similar to those in the panelled room. The south closet was lighted by a half-window similar to that in the panelled room while the north closet was lighted by a small window in the east wall. ²⁹ The south closet was removed in 1800

This was the only opening in the east wall as can be seen in the Malcom drawing. When work was done on the East Wing the opening could be seen still in place though unfortunately the angle of vision prevented its being photographed. The existence of this small window gives reasonably good proof that there were no half-windows on the north side of the house.

when the East Wing was built and the opening put through between the two parts of the house; the north closet remains to this day.

In 1855 Charles Francis Adams undertook a thorough remodelling of the room. All the wood trim was removed and replaced with trim in the style of the period which still remains in the room. As installed, the chestnut wood of the trim was given a dark stain. Brooks Adams had this woodwork painted about 1920 as part of his work of returning the house more to its aspect in John and Abigail's time.³⁰ The room has been repainted since Brooks Adams' time and its color slightly changed. It should be repainted to match the historic color which can be found under the disused burglar alarm attachments³¹ at the windows.

30

Brooks Adams' idea apparently was a partial restoration rather than a complete one which would have involved replacement of the wood trim rather than just painting it. In effect he did away with the Victorian character of the room. That this gave him pause for thought is shown in a letter to his brother, Henry, in 1906 in which he said, "In short but one thing remains--the dining room, and about that I hesitate. Should it be restored in white, or left as our father changed it."

31

A Munsell color standard chip, No..5Y 9/1, an off white, is on file at the Site

At the same time that he had the woodwork painted, Brooks Adams had the walls covered with pink oatmeal paper to replace the brown floral wallpaper which Charles Francis Adams had installed. The oatmeal paper was replaced in kind in 1948 and the replacement is still in good condition. The straw matting put down by Brooks Adams was removed from the floors about 1950, and the floor was refinished.³² Care should be taken in the course of structural work not to disturb the floor boards if this is possible.

Other changes in the room made by Charles Francis Adams which remain are the 1860 gas chandelier (electrified by Brooks Adams in 1920), the 1870 terra cotta facing around the fireplace, the louvered shutters and the casing on the beams--³³ both of which probably date from 1855. The safe installed in the dining room closet by Mrs. Charles Francis Adams in 1880 was moved to the East Wing basement when the heating system was put in. The safe is an interesting example of graining metal to make

32

There are references in 1787 and 1791 to a "floor Cloth" or "oil cloth" being put down in this room so it is possible that the floor boards were always covered. As mentioned previously, later Adamases put oriental rugs on top of the straw matting.

33

The casing was removed a few years ago in order that the beams might be checked. The condition of the beams was found to be good and the surface to be covered with a gray-green paint.

it appear like wood and should be returned to the dining room closet if space can be made for it.

The entrance hallway in the center of the house serves to provide access to both the panelled room and the dining room as well as to the basement and the second floor. The walls are covered with the same gray forest scene paper as is found in the hallways of the East Wing. Brooks Adams installed it about 1906. A small section of it is missing on the south wall just east of the front door where some plaster had to be removed in order that the front door bell pull which had come loose could be stabilized (see Illustration No. 13). There is more than enough new paper remaining from the original order to recover this with a ceiling-to-floor strip which would match the part of the scene now on the wall.³⁴ The lower HL hinge on the front door is a modern replacement of the original. A copy of the original should be made and installed in place of the modern hinge. The woodwork of the hallway is painted a light gray. On completion of the work it should be painted to match the historic color, an off-white.³⁵

34

If new paper would look too new in contrast to the paper remaining on the wall a piece might be taken off the walls of the second floor passageway from behind one of the bookcases and reused in the front hall. This procedure was used in the first floor and it proved to be very successful there.

35

Munsell Color Standard paper No. 5Y9/1 is on file at the Site.

The floor is covered with linoleum dating from the historic period. When this was taken up it was discovered that the floor boards had at one time been marbleized. This was very worn where traffic had been heaviest but could still be seen clearly in the corners (see Illustration Nos. 14,15). There was a cat hole near the bottom of the door to the basement stairs which had been boarded up. If any existing example of a covering which would open and close can be found as a model, the hole should be reopened. The area through the doorway, directly under the stairs, was painted by the National Park Service having been previously unpainted.

The staircase is apparently original. Except for the handrail and the treads and risers it was painted the same color, an off-white, as the wood trim in the hallway. The handrail is painted a dark brown. The stair treads and risers are now painted a light gray. In the historic period and up until the 1950's they were painted gray (see Illustration No. 16). All the woodwork should be painted to match the historic
36
colors at the conclusion of the work.

36

This gray color can still be found under the carpeting on the tread which goes up to the 1836 Passageway (see Illustration No. 17). A Munsell color standard chip No. N4.5/ showing this historic color is on file at the Site.

The conditions in the stair hall on the second floor, with the exception of the floor, are similar to those on the first; and the woodwork should be treated in the same way. In the historic period the floor was covered with straw matting--a piece of which remains under the tall clock in the southeast corner. The Adams Memorial Society covered it with a brown linoleum which remained in place until it was taken up in the course of exploratory work. The floor surface is in poor condition (see Illustration No. 18) and should again be covered with the straw matting.³⁷

The room to the east of the stair hall was used by the Adamses as a guest room.³⁸ One of the two closets which were originally built into the room was removed in 1800 when the East Wing was built; the other closet remains with its original woodwork intact. The bolection moulding around the fireplace is apparently original but the tiles were installed by the Adamses. As in other rooms the floor was covered with straw matting in the

37

Some pieces of this matting are in storage in the attic of the Carriage House. If this is usable it should be used; if it is not, inquiry should be made as to the availability of new matting.

38

This was the room used by the present Superintendent during her residence in the house between 1920 and 1926.

historic period. The wallpaper of the historic period was damaged by water leakage during the period in which the Adams Memorial Society ran the house. New wallpaper was put on by the National Park Service in the early 1950's. The paper which was removed was not available commercially, and unfortunately its replacement lacks the character of the original (see Illustration Nos. 19, 20). It is recommended that the original be copied by the silk screen process and replaced on the wall. Also, the wood trim should be painted to match its historic cream color which is represented by Munsell color standard chip No. 5Y9/2.

On the west side of the stair hall is the President's bedroom. As in the panelled room below, the closets, which had originally been built in on either side of the chimney breast, were removed by the Adamses and windows cut in the west wall.

39.

This process was used quite successfully to reproduce the wallpaper of the historic period in another section of the house. Despite its expense (which depends in part on the number of colors involved) it is worth doing to recreate the correct historic appearance and atmosphere in one of the major rooms of the house. The specimen of the correct wallpaper can be found in a drawer of the highboy in the President's bedroom along with other samples of wallpaper left from the historic period.

40

This was not done until 1792 though there had been discussion of it in the correspondence in 1787. The windows were cut through in the west of the panelled room in 1788.

During the historic period the plaster walls were covered with wallpaper identical to that on the walls of the adjacent bathroom. The Adams Memorial Society found the paper not to its liking and had it removed in the late 1920's and replaced with the paper which is now on the walls. Also, during the historic period the floor was covered with straw matting. It is interesting to note that there are not the normal two layers of boarding making up the floor but three. When the third layer (the second layer of finish flooring) was put down is not known, and there has been no opportunity to investigate the matter further. An examination of the nails used to fasten the boards down would be revealing as would a look at the surface of the original finish floor. A possibility is that it may have been put down when the closets were taken out in 1792 because of possible damage done to the surface at that time. 41

As in most of the other rooms, the color of the paint on the

41

The board in the hallway of the Kitchen Wing just outside the doorway between the two spaces was apparently put down to raise the level of the hall floor up to that of the bedroom. This board, as mentioned in the report on the Kitchen Wing, has a feathered edge which makes the surface of the hall floor smooth. The finish on this board indicates that it dates from before 1869 and perhaps much earlier.

woodwork has been changed somewhat from that of the historic period. When the room is repainted the color should be made
42
to match the cream off-white of the historic period.

There are four spaces on the third floor of the 1730 House. The stair hall divides the whole space into two parts. On the staircase between the second and third floors there remains the frame for a gate installed by the Adams Memorial Society to keep the public from going to the third story. Because the public is no longer allowed in the stair hall on the second floor there is no longer any need for a gate, and the frame and hardware should be removed. The stair treads should be painted the same darker color as those in the flight below. The north-south beams which frame the stairwell are exposed to view in the staircase. Facing each other on each beam are filled notches. The filler pieces appear to have the same paint layering as the beams themselves so it seems likely that the notches were cut before erection of the framework
43
and then never used. It should also be noted that the

42

A Munsell color standard chip No. 2.5Y8/2 is on file at the Site.

43

It was not uncommon practice to prefabricate as much of the framework as possible before its erection. Never-used notches for joists were also found in the remaining original beam which ran parallel to the East Wing basement stairs.

bottom line of the wallpaper in the stair hall has apparently been altered in various areas, and in some places it appears as if paint had been applied over the paper. Across the landing directly at the top of the stairs a small piece of wood trim has been nailed to the floor boards. It is not old and appears to serve no function and should be removed. The floor boards are painted a deep yellow color, but under the BX cable which was installed along the floor at the south wall in the 1920's there is no paint on the boards indicating that they had not been painted in the historic period (see Illustration No. 21). This condition should be restored. The wood trim should be painted the same off-white color used in the rest of the stair hall. The plaster walls should be whitewashed to match the white whitewash, now discolored by dirt, found behind the 1920's BX cable.

The room to the west of the stair hall was used as a nursery when Brooks Adams was young.⁴⁴ Prior to 1869 there was a connecting doorway between the room and the third story of the Kitchen Wing (see Illustration No. 6). This was blocked off in

the remodelling of 1869, and, at the same time, the 1730 roof timber was cased. The surface of the roof timber itself is covered with green paint where it was not smoothed away for installation of the casing in 1869.⁴⁵ There is considerable charring towards the top of the timber. This may have been caused by the roof fire of 1821 or by another fire of which we know nothing. As has been mentioned earlier in this report the fireplace and mantelpiece date from sometime in the mid-nineteenth century. In style the mantelpiece looks more like 1850 than 1869 so it may well have installed in the early 1850's when Charles Francis Adams was doing a lot of work on the house. The wood trim in the room should be painted to match the gray color on it in 1927.⁴⁶ As in the hallway the floor was not painted at that time, and the paint now on the floor boards should be removed.

45

A number of nail holes were found on the west side of the timber which cannot be accounted for by the nails of the casing. These were probably made by nails used to fasten the board siding of the original dormer which would have been removed about 1750 when the Kitchen Wing was built.

46

A Munsell color standard chip No. 10YR7/2 is on file at the Site.

There are two spaces to the east of the stair hall. The one just to the west of the hall contains the ladder to the scuttle which leads out to the roof. It also has the opening which provides access to the space between the roof of the 1730 House and the roof of the 1836 Passageway. A heat exchanger was installed in this space in the 1950's. The wood shingles which were on the roof of the 1730 House when the passageway was built are still visible in this space but they are not original.

The space furthest east on the third floor of the 1730 House served as a child's bedroom during Brooks Adams' youth. The formerly solid east wall was broken through in 1800 for access to the then new East Wing, and at that time the opening provided the only access to the third story of the East Wing. There is no fireplace in the chimney breast on the east wall. As in the other spaces on this story, the floor boards were not painted when the Adamses were in residence. Proof of this can be seen under the 1920's BX cable which runs along the floor.⁴⁷ The woodwork in the 1920's was painted a gray color

⁴⁷

The BX cable was run through exposed on this floor to feed down through the walls to fixtures in the floor below.

which can still be found behind the electric outlets. The wood trim, the exposed framing and the plaster walls here and in the adjoining space should be painted to match the colors⁴⁸ which were on them at the end of the historic period. The wallpaper in this room is in poor condition and those pieces which are hanging loose should be refastened to the wall. (see Illustration No. 22). It is not recommended that new paper be installed because, to get the correct pattern, silk screening would have to be used and this is very expensive for an area not⁴⁹ opened to the public. Any other paper would distinctly change the atmosphere as it has in the guest room below. In general, it seems like a good rule to keep anything from the historic period which can possibly be kept even if it is in poor condition, because it is in fact unique and, once gone, another link with the past is gone.

The next section of this report will deal with the utilities in the 1730 House.

48

The plaster in the space between the east room and the stair hall was painted green at that time as were all the exposed framing members. The wood trim was painted gray. Munsell standard chips Nos. 2.5G6/4 (green) and 10Y6/1 (gray) showing these colors are on file at the Site.

49

This assumes that there would be no interest in this wallpaper for commercial reproduction.

C. Utilities

As in other sections of the report, the burglar and fire alarm systems are included among the utilities along with the heating and electrical systems. There is no plumbing in the 1730 House.

The hot air heating system was installed in the house in the 1950's. The furnace in the basement of the Carriage House produces hot water which is pumped to heat exchangers in the house. Air is blown over the hot water in the exchangers and then distributed by ducts through the house. One of the heat exchangers is located in the basement of the 1730 House under the dining room. The ducts from this supply hot air to the first floor hallway through a register which once served an air furnace installed by Brooks Adams. The register is thus part of the historic scene and should be maintained as such. Other ducts traverse the crawl space under the panelled room and supply air to the Kitchen Wing. The dining room closet contains a duct and, also, hot water pipes which supply a heat exchanger which is in the passageway attic. As previously mentioned, these intrusions have forced the removal of the safe (now in the basement of the East Wing) which Mrs. Charles Francis Adams had installed in the closet. If possible, the position or

size of the duct should be altered so that the safe can be reinstalled in its traditional location. The heat exchanger in the attic of the passageway supplies hot air to the chamber on the west side of the stair hall, to the other rooms on the third floor of the 1730 House and to the third floor of the East Wing.

The electricity in the house was installed by Brooks Adams in 1920. At that time the exposed BX cable was run above the third floor to feed down to outlets on the second floor. This cable belongs to the historic period and should be left in place though disconnected. New wiring should be installed throughout the 1730 section as in the rest of the house.

As has been mentioned in the reports on other sections of the house, the fire alarm system is owned by ADT. The tubing of this system should be reinstalled in neater fashion where it intrudes on the historic scene and new, small rosettes put in place of the older, larger rosettes in spaces too small for the tubing to be used (see Illustration No. 22).

The burglar alarm system is owned by the Site. It is operated by magnetic switches at the windows of the first floor level only and on the exterior and basement door. There is also wiring on the transom over the front door. Replacement of the

old, obtrusive, thick wiring with modern thin wiring is recommended.

The work necessary to put in good condition the surface fabric and basic structure of the 1730 House has been described in this fourth section of the Part II report. Following this is the Part II for the 1836 Passageway which will bring to a conclusion the entire Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data Section, for the Adams Mansion.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

Adams Mansion, sketch of house from southeast drawn by E. Malcom of New York in 1798 showing the house as it was in 1787 when the Adamses acquired it from the Borland family. Note in the otherwise blank east wall the small window which lit the northeast closet in the east room on the first floor. West wall was also blank at this time. Also, note pairs of half windows at each end of south facade, each of which provided light to a closet. Round arches over front entrance and central dormer were eliminated when East Wing and front portico were built in 1800.

Original drawing at Adams National Historic Site
photographed by Fasch Studio, Milton, Mass.

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

Adams Mansion, view from southwest taken from approximately same place as Whipple daguerreotype (see Illustration No. 9). Only one half window remains on the south front but four windows have been cut through the formerly blank west wall. Slate has replaced wood shingles on the roof and the railing has been eliminated.

Photo: National Park Service, HABS
Cervin Robinson, March, 1962

Neg. on file at Library of Congress

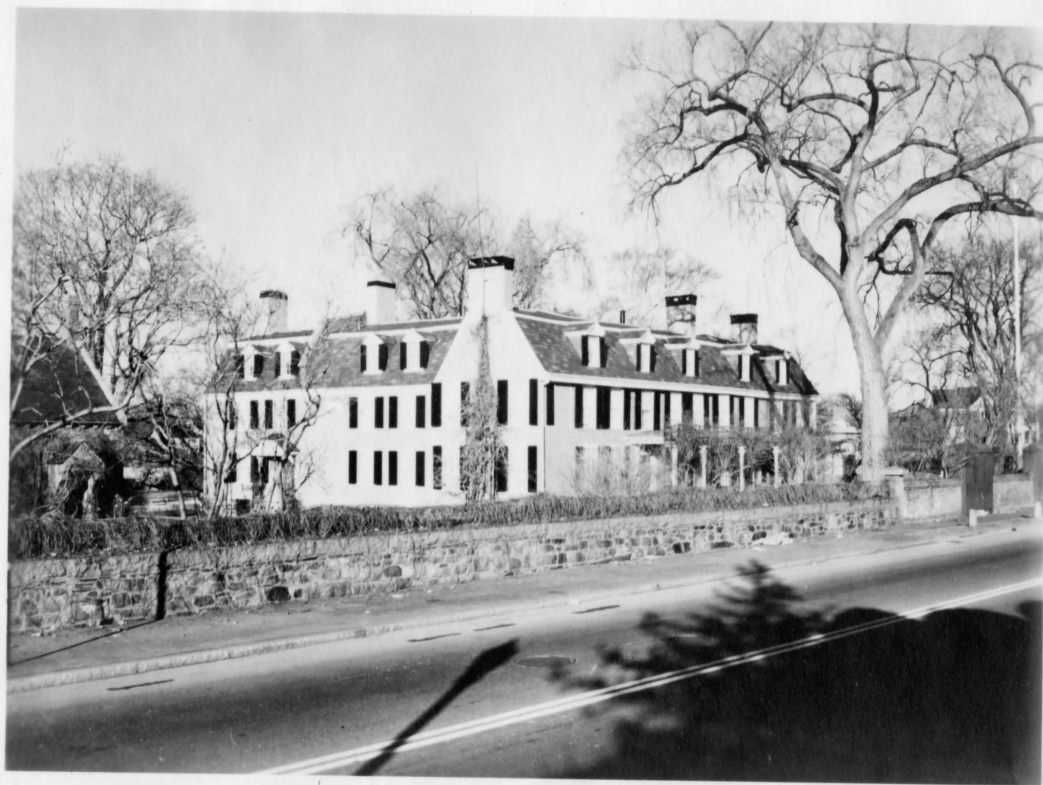


ILLUSTRATION NO. 3

Kitchen Wing, second floor, hallway,
view looking south down at threshold of doorway
between hall and President's Bedroom. South girt
of Kitchen Wing is in foreground, north girt of
1730 part of house is just behind it under door
frame. One of several remaining clapboards of
north wall of 1730 part can be seen fastened to
girt just below threshold.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., August, 1965

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 4

East Wing, first floor, hallway, view
looking west at original east exterior wall of
1730 part of house. Brick water table on stone
foundation wall is similar to that on still-exposed
west wall. Exterior brick walls had not been
painted by 1800.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., December, 1964

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 5

1730 House, third floor, west room, view looking northeast down at joining of roof and timber and north plate after floor boards had been taken up and casing of timber removed. Note south plate of Kitchen Wing just beyond north plate of 1730 House. The two are joined in various places by iron or wood pins.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 6

1730 House, third floor, west room, view looking northwest at original roof timber still in place. Casing put on in 1869 has been removed temporarily for structural investigation. Note bottom of opening to Kitchen Wing in north wall of room beyond timber. This opening was closed up in 1869. Charring on roof timber may have occurred during 1821 roof fire.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 7

1730 House, basement, crawl space under
panelled room, view looking west up at first floor
framing to show poor condition of joists and major
timber.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966



ILLUSTRATION NO. 8

1730 House, basement stairs, view looking south up at framing of first to second floor staircase which is in poor condition. Note initials TBA written on back of riser. These should be preserved.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 9

Adams Mansion, view of house from southwest as it was in 1849 just before Charles Francis Adams moved in. Note the lightning rod on the west wall and, also, the presence of only two flues in the west chimney which indicates that there was no fireplace in the west room on the third floor at that time. Compare this with Illustration No. 2 which shows three flues.

Photo: Daguerreotype by Whipple of Boston, March, 1849

Copy neg. by Fasch Studios, Milton, Mass., on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 10

1730 House, exterior view of west and of south wall showing where half-window at first floor level was removed and the wall clapboarded. Note change in pattern of clapboards where window had been.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

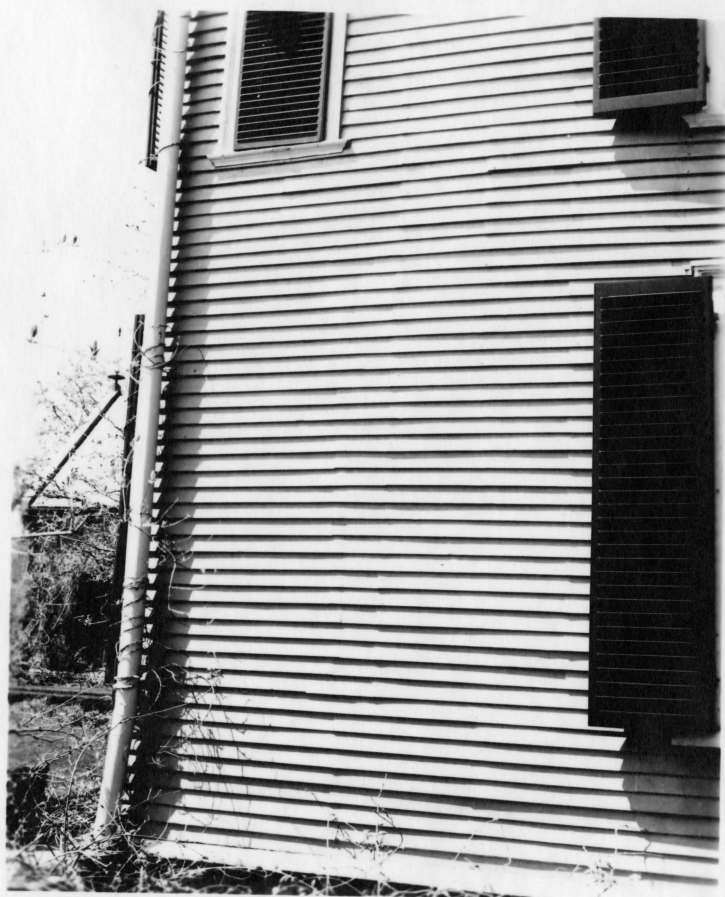


ILLUSTRATION NO. 11

Kitchen Wing, first floor, pan closet, view looking south at south wall of closet. Back side of original plastered wall of panelled room can be seen behind closet wall where it was broken through above the shelves. It was at that point that a small section of the original 1730 finish plaster was removed so that its surface could be examined under a microscope and the number of layers of whitewash thereon determined.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966.

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 12

1730 House, first floor, mahogany panelled
(west) room, taken in 1946, view looking northwest
across the room showing straw matting on the floor
before it was taken up. Adamses put their oriental
rugs on top of the matting.

Photo: National Park Service
Abbe Rowe, c. 1946.

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 13

1730 House, first floor, hallway, view
looking south at south wall showing where some paper
and plaster were removed in 1964 in order that
additional support for the loosened door bell could
be put in the wall.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



Illustration No. 14

1730 House, first floor, hallway, view looking south down at floor after removal of linoleum showing marbleizing found on floor boards. As can be seen most of it has been worn away except at the corners.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., March, 1964

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 15

1730 House, first floor, hallway, close-up view looking down in southwest corner at marbleizing found on floor boards after removal of linoleum.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., March, 1964

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

ILLUSTRATION NO. 16

1730 House, first floor, hallway, view
taken about 1946 looking north across hall showing
contrasting dark color on stair treads and risers
and light color on balustrade and edge of treads.
Note cat hole in door to basement stairs.

Photo: National Park Service
Abbe Rowe, c. 1946

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

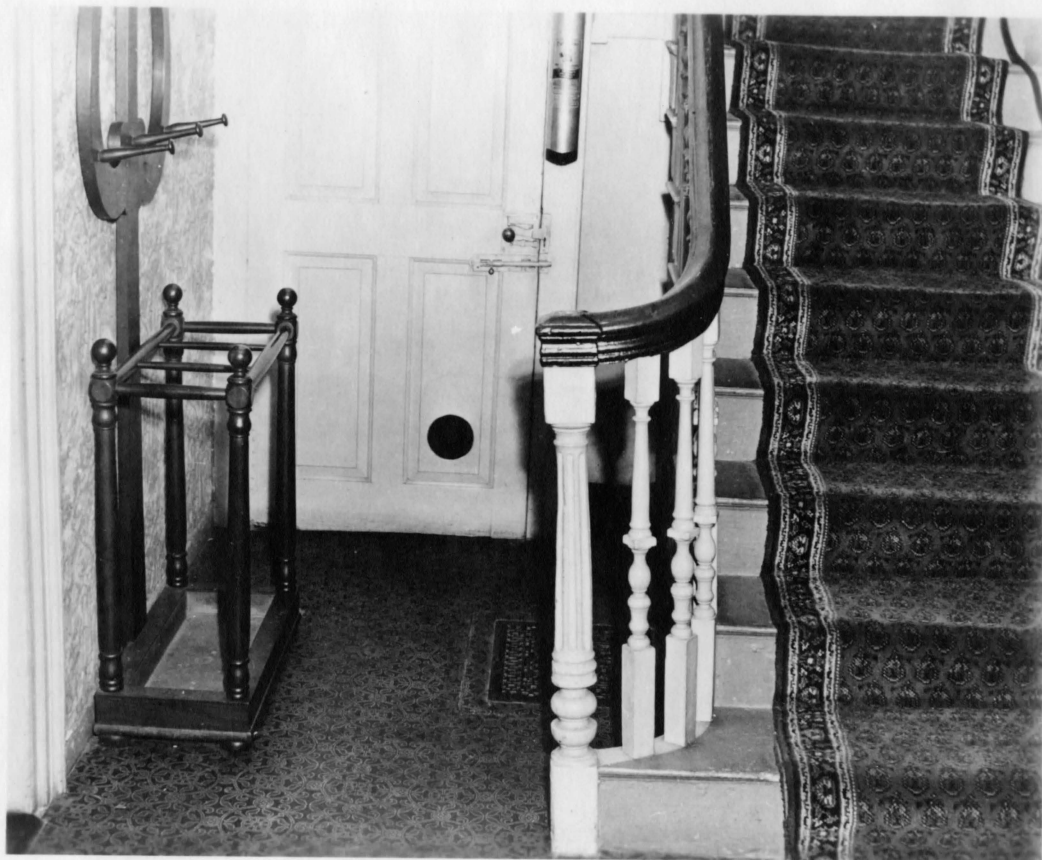


ILLUSTRATION NO. 17

1730 House, staircase between first and second floors, view looking north at stairs leading up to 1836 Passageway showing dark gray color on tread and riser where carpet is up.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

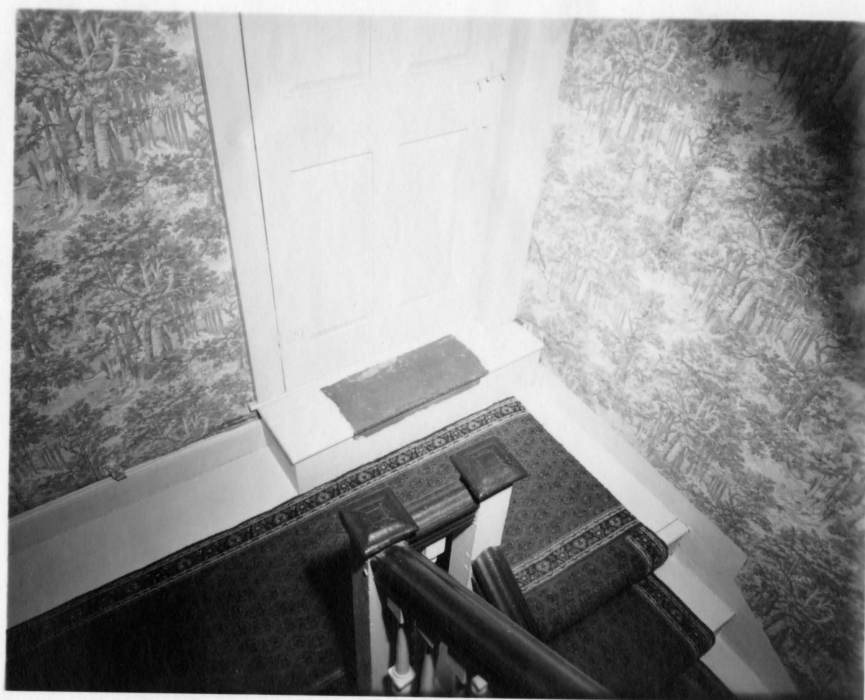


ILLUSTRATION NO. 18

1730 House, second floor, hallway, view
looking south across floor showing its poor condition
after removal of linoleum put down by the Adams
Memorial Society. Remaining piece of straw matting
which covered the whole floor during the historic
period can be seen under the clock.

Photo: National Park Service
George H. Cushing, Jr., March, 1964

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 19

1730 House, second floor, guest (east)
room, view taken about 1946 looking northwest across
room showing wallpaper of historic period still on
the walls and straw matting on the floor.

Photo: National Park Service
Abbe Rowe, c. 1946

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 20

1730 House, second floor, guest room,
view looking northwest across room showing wall-
paper put on by government after historic period
and floor with straw matting removed. Compare
with Illustration No. 20.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

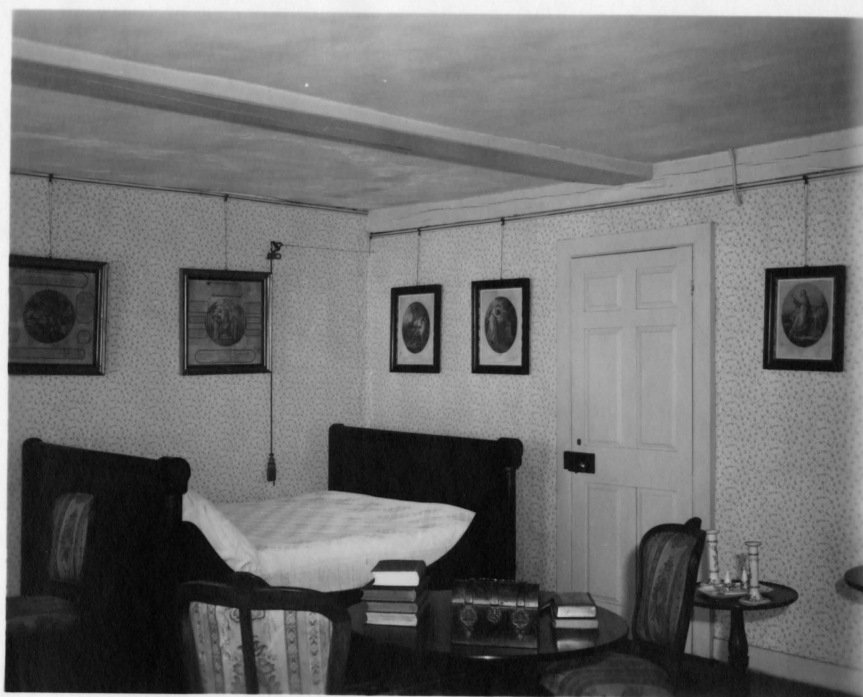


ILLUSTRATION NO. 21

1730 House, third floor, hallway, view
looking south across hallway showing BX cable installed
in the 1920's and area of floor protected by it which
remained unpainted. Floor was not painted during
historic period of Adams family occupancy.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr., May, 1966

Neg. on file at Adams NHS



ILLUSTRATION NO. 22

1730 House, third floor, east room,
view looking east across room showing poor condition
of wallpaper and large old-fashioned rosette of
fire alarm system on the ceiling.

Photo: National Park Service
George M. Cushing, Jr.

Neg. on file at Adams NHS

