

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	IPS.468
Historic Name:	Giddings, George - Burnham, Thomas House
Common Name:	
Address:	37 Argilla Rd
City/Town:	Ipswich
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	303
Year Constructed:	r 1685
Architect(s):	Burnham, Thomas
Architectural Style(s):	First Period
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Archaeology, Historic; Architecture; Exploration Settlement
Area(s):	IPS.AK: First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (03/09/1990); Nat'l Register TRA (03/09/1990)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Slate Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FIRST PERIOD SURVEY

IPS.468

NRIND NRTRA 3/9/1990 [IPS.AK]

FORM NO.

36

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Photos

- 21:9 attic
- 21:12 right-hand chamber
- 21:13 left-hand room
- 21:14 detail, summer beam, left-hand room
- 21:16 detail, summer tie beam at south wall, right-hand chamber
- 21:20 recessed joints, laid flatwise, cellar
- 21:21 south and west facades
- 21:22 south and east facades

Town Ipswich

Address 37 Argilla Road

Historic Name Giddings-Burnham House

Use: Present Residence

Original Residence

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1680-1690

Source A.L. Cummings' research and stylistic analysis

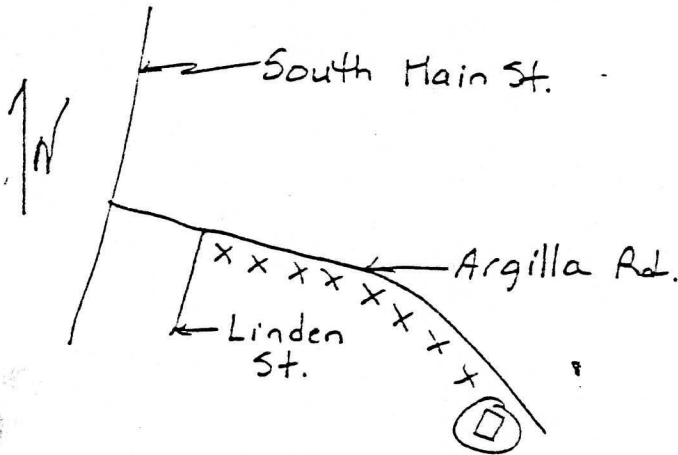
Style First Period core, Second Period exterior

Architect Unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric Clapboards

Outbuildings garage - 20th c.

Sketch Map:



Major Alterations (with dates) Lean-to raised to 2 stories, ca. 1884

Condition Good

Moved No Date N/A

Acreage 8.35 acres

Setting rural: suburban street of houses of mixed date set back from street, facing south

GRID REFERENCE 19 / 349-900 / 4725-970

GS QUADRANGLE Ipswich

SCALE 1:25,000 1" = 200'

Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Boston University

Date June 1986

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: IPSWICH	Form No: 36
Property Name: Giddings-Burnham House	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

The stairs are enclosed in vertical feather-edged sheathing. Most of the sheathing appears to date from the restoration of the house in 1935. The left- and right-hand chambers have c. 12 inch wide summer tie beams with quarter round chamfers with flat collars and lamb's tongue stops.

Framing in the attic is of principal rafters and common purlins. There are mortised collar beams. The collar beams are relatively small members placed quite high up on the rafters. (Note: collar beams in the nearby Low House are similar).

Framing in the cellar consists, according to Cummings, of material salvaged from the earlier house on the site: There are longitudinal spanning beams with broad, flat chamfers. Joists laid flat wise are framed into the spanning beams with tusk tenons.

Another feature of the cellar is the positioning of a joist at the inner edge of the foundation and filling the space between the sill and joist with a clay and shell mixture.

LATER SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Finishes in the house include vertical board sheathing and some two panel doors. Because William Sumner Appleton visited the house in 1914 and found most of the original finish removed, we can assume that the current finishes date from the 1935 restoration. Appleton did find an oak wainscot door of sunken panels and shadow molded stiles and rails in a reused position in the house and acquired it for SPNEA's architectural museum. The door, characteristic of English work of the period, is assumed to come from the earlier house on the site.

REFERENCES

1. A. L. Cummings, Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979:139-140
2. David McLaren Hort, Report, George Giddings House, 1978 for Mr. and Mrs. Norton Sloan.
3. Cummings, Massachusetts and Its First Period Houses. Publication of the Colonial Society in Massachusetts 51:148-149.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: IPSWICH	Form No: 36
Property Name: Giddings-Burnham House	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Giddings-Burnham house is 5 bays wide, one room deep, and 2 1/2 stories in height with a rear lean-to and a 1977 gambrel roofed addition to the left side. The house was built as a double cell, central chimney structure c. 1680-1690, and has history of several rear additions, possibly there was at first a lean-to. Then c. 1730 a gambrel roofed one story ell was built. The ell was later raised to two stories and in the 1930s was remodelled to the present lean-to with full dormer. The clapboarded exterior is First Period in appearance except for the sash windows. The windows are atypically arranged on the facade, with four windows on first floor and three above. There is a hewn overhang on the facade and sides, and a second overhang at the gable ends. The roof pitch is relatively steep. Small consoles at the overhang on the facade appear to be a restoration feature. The pilastered central chimney is a reconstruction made during restoration of the house in 1935.

MAJOR FIRST PERIOD FEATURES

First Period features are visible in all four rooms and the cellar. Other important features now enclosed in the walls which were discovered during the 1977 work will also be described.

In the left-hand room, 18 feet deep by 15 1/2 feet wide, the longitudinal summer beam has quarter-round chamfers, flat collars and lamb's tongue stops. Joists, spaced 19 1/2 to 20 1/2 inches on centers, are framed into the summer beam with bare faced soffit tenons. Exposed framing in the room including the joists is of oak, except for the summer beam which is made of another wood, possibly tamarack. When the west wall of the left-hand room was opened in 1977, wattle and daub wall filling was discovered. The wattles, pieces of oak 1 to 2 inches wide and shaped to something of a point at each end, "are sprung into notches in the studs." [1] Clay and straw daub was pressed between and behind the wattles.

Opening up the west end of the north wall in 1977 revealed two sets of studs. One set is composed of 2" x 3" studs, a single story in length, which are mortised into the frame and run from sill to girt and from girt to plate. The second set which is redundant, is composed of studs 2 stories in height which are lapped and pegged to the girt. Possibly the second set of studs is related to the George Giddings house built perhaps as early as 1635 and formerly on the site.

The right-hand room, of dimensions identical to the left room, has similar framing features, including a possible tamarack longitudinal summer beam with quarter round chamfers, flat collars and lamb's tongue stops.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUED ON SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Communit IPSWICH	Form No: 36
Property Name: Giddings-Burnham House	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Giddings-Burnham house retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials and setting in its First Period structure which embodies distinctive characteristics of form and construction eligible under Criterion C.

The house is representative of First Period construction in the last quarter of the 17th century in beam chamfering, joist spacing, and framing system. However, the house incorporates certain conservative features which link the house to carpentry practices in the earliest years of settlement. These features are the wattle and daub wall fill, the use of flat-wise joists in the cellar and the two story lapped studs in the north wall. Cummings argues that the conservative features are present for two reasons. There was an earlier house on the site from which material was salvaged, and the presumed builder of the present house, Carpenter Thomas Burnham, was an elderly man by the time the house was built.

George Giddings, who was granted the land in 1635, sold the property with dwelling house to Thomas Burnham in 1667. Burnham was sixty-two in 1680, the earliest date Cummings felt the house could have been built on the basis of style. In using wattle and daub, a wallfill method which had pretty well passed out of common use by the 1680s [2], and survives today in only one other example (Fairbanks House), Burnham may have been clinging to construction methods learned in his youth. Familiarity with or preference for traditional methods may have predisposed Burnham to salvage and use the flatwise joists in the cellar and two story studs in the north wall. Flatwise joists, already being superseded in England by depthwise joists when the first settlers arrived, survive in only one other known location in Massachusetts, the Fairbanks House of 1637. The tusk tenons of these joists are likewise a conservative feature. The use of two story studs occurs in some of the earliest surviving houses, although very occasionally also in later houses. The 2 story studs in the Burnham house may have been part of the earlier house. Their redundant use along with one story studs in the present house is not readily explainable.

The possibility exists that carpenter Burnham built the two 17th century houses on Heartbreak Road. They are close geographically, Thomas Burnham was the father of James Burnham, owner of the house at 37 Heartbreak Road, and the Giddings-Burnham shares with the Low House a rather distinctive collar beam configuration. The potential for comparative study with the two Heartbreak Road houses, should their concealed features be uncovered, adds to the importance of the Burnham house.



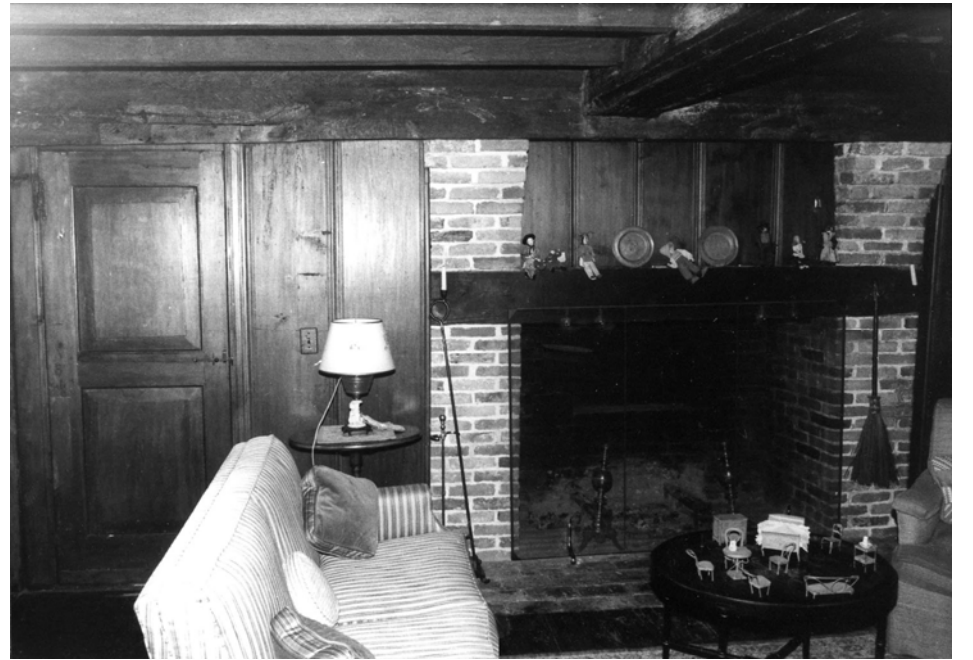
South and west facades



South and east facades



Left-hand room



Right-hand chamber



Detail, summer beam, left-hand room



Detail, summer tie beam at south wall, right-hand chamber



Attic



Ipswich, TIA
 37 Argilla Road
 Map 42C-070A
 -> trap 56A
 Scale: 1" = 200'

SCALE 1" = 100'
 ZONING AS SHOWN
 NO PARCEL 116

42C

54A

41D

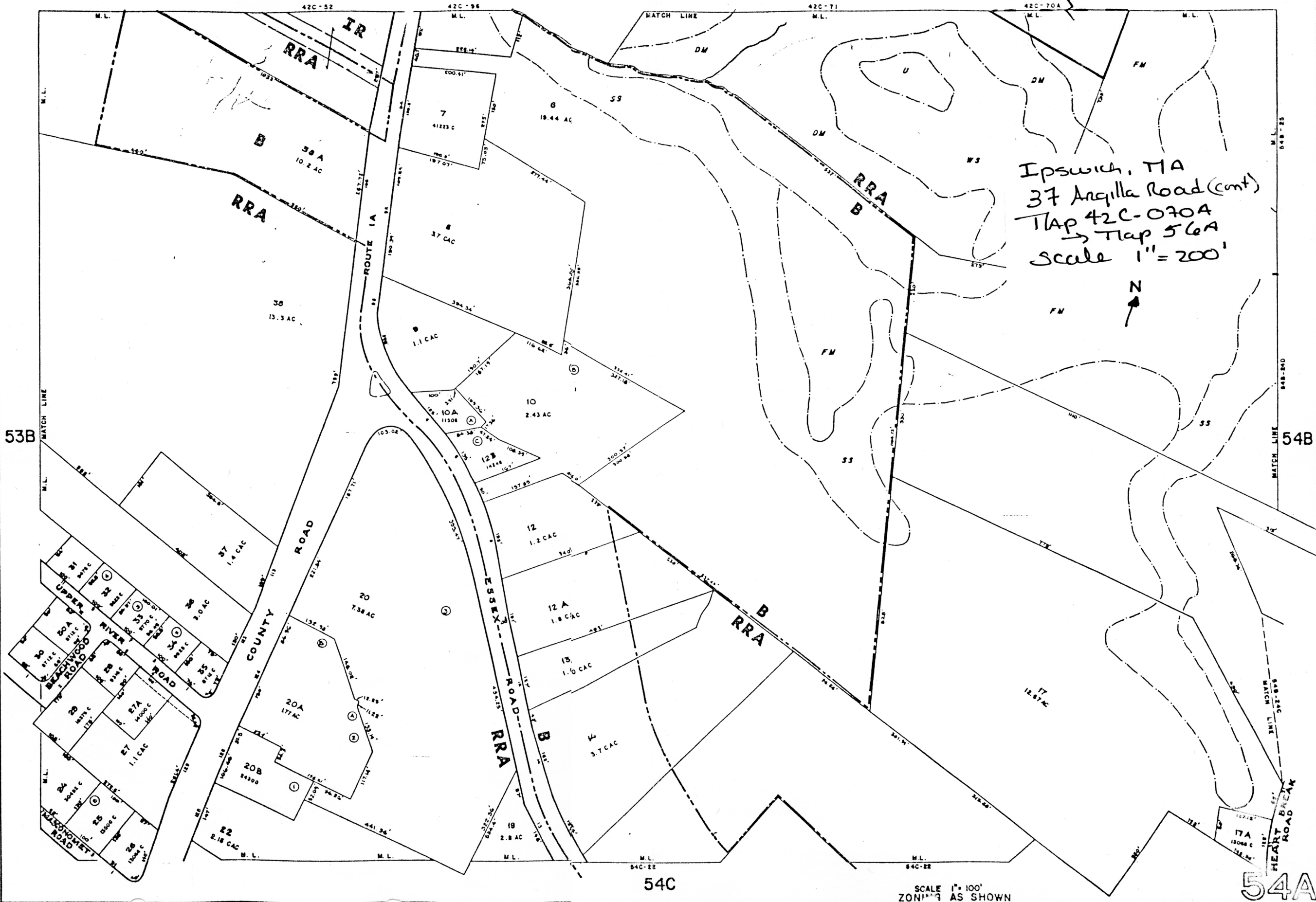
42D

42A-167

64A-36A

64B-28

42C



Ipswich, MA
 37 Angilla Road (cont)
 Tap 42C-070A
 → Tap 56A
 Scale 1" = 200'



53B

54B

54A

54C

SCALE 1" = 100'
 ZONING AS SHOWN