

LOWELL CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

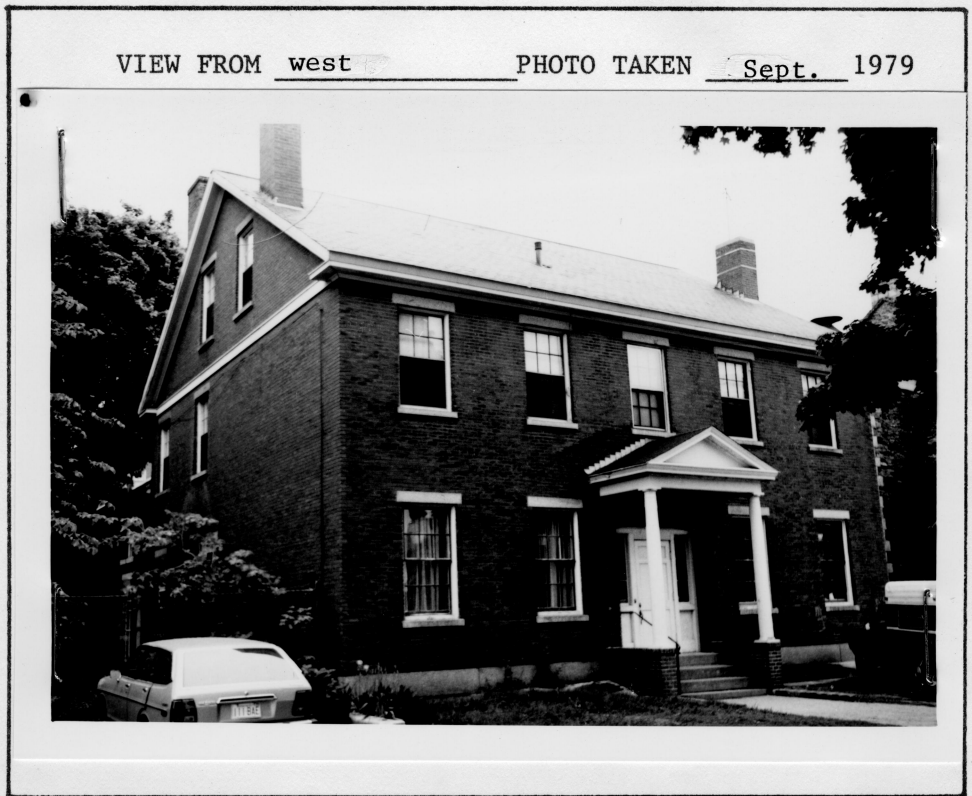
IDENTIFICATION 10 KIRK STREET MAP SHEET # 7
 1) CURRENT OWNER The Rector, Wardens and Vestry of St. Anne's Church, Lowell OWNER OCCUPIED yes
 2) HISTORIC NAME Benjamin F. French House
 3) CURRENT NAME St. Anne's Hall
 4) PROPERTY TYPE single family dwelling 5) ZONING CLASSIFICATION B3
 6) TAXES: PAYMENTS exempt STATUS clear
 7) WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF LNHP, City Hall HD, LHPD

HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

1) CONSTRUCTION DATE 1837-8
 SOURCE 1838-9 directories, Historical Sketch of St. Anne's Church, 1925
 2) ARCHITECT OR BUILDER unknown
 3) HISTORIC OWNER Benjamin F. French
 4) ORIGINAL USE: GF residential UF residential
 5) PREVIOUS BLDGS ON PROPERTY yes DATE 1830-36
 SOURCE document: Historical Sketch of St. Anne's Church, 1925, p. 73-4.

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

1) ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Greek Revival
 2) PRESENT USE:
 GF institutional
 UF institutional
 3) NO OF STORIES 2½
 4) PROP SQ FT 12,276
 5) PLAN rectangular
 6) ROOF endwall gable
 7) STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
load-bearing masonry
 8) OUTBUILDINGS
none
 9) MATERIALS:
 FOUNDATION
granite



FACADE front & sides: red pressed brick w/stretcher bond
 TRIM wood porch, granite sills and lintels, slate roof
 10) NOTABLE SURFACE & LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS mature trees

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 1) CONDITION OF BUILDING FABRIC needs minor repair
- 2) IF DETERIORATED, CAUSES not applicable
- 3) INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC BLDG FABRIC: GF intact with evolutionary alterations
UF intact original fabric
- 4) SURROUNDING LAND USES commercial, institutional, canal frontage
- 5) INTEGRITY OF PROP'S HIST SETTING intact with minor intrusions and/or losses
- 6) IMPORTANCE OF PROP TO HIST SETTING integral to character

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Facing the Merrimack Canal is the Benjamin F. French House. This brick structure is Greek Revival in style, and is characterized by smooth-faced granite sills and lintels, and a large granite lintel over the door. The doorway with its rectangular transom and side lights is original; however, the triangular pedimented porch was added post-1925. Also original are the 6/6 double-hung windows.

The early twentieth-century wing added to the rear of the French House contains St. Anne's Hall. The hall is faced with pressed brick and has rectangular triple windows, double-hung, with pointed-arch muntins in the upper sashes.

At the Kirk Street side a new brick house has been constructed as an addition. It corresponds to the French House in materials and basic form, and was clearly meant to act as a sympathetic unification of the entire structure, which is essentially two outward-facing houses joined by a long church hall.

The Benjamin French House is important to Lowell both architecturally and historically. Its occupancy for many years by the first agent of the Boott Cotton Mills and its subsequent connection with St. Anne's Church and Theodore Edson through its use as an orphanage figure in Lowell's industrial and social history. Its siting on the Merrimack Canal and present Lucy Larcom Park is especially attractive.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The 1832 map shows a rectangular structure on the site situated behind St. Anne's Church. This was apparently a Sunday School building constructed in 1830 on the Merrimack Manufacturing Company's land near where Benjamin French's house was subsequently built. The construction of this house made removal of the Sunday School building to the church lot necessary in 1836 (Historical Sketch, 1925, p. 73).

The Boott Cotton Mills were incorporated in 1835, and started operations in 1836. Benjamin French had charge of these mills until 1845 when he was succeeded by Linus Child (Cowley, 1868, p. 56). In 1837-8, French was listed as boarding at the Merrimack House, and in 1839 the listing was "house Anne Street, near St. Anne's Church." This information points to a construction date of 1837-1838.

French was listed as agent of the Boott Cotton Mills through 1844, and beginning in 1845 he was listed as president of the Railroad Bank. This was a bank established especially for the use of the corporations, and French was on its Board of Directors in 1836. He continued to live on Anne Street until his death, ca. 1854. In 1855 Mrs. Benjamin French alone was listed at that address. She remained in the house through 1874.

Rev. Theodore Edson of St. Anne's Church purchased the French house on Feb. 27, 1874, for \$20,000. St. Mary's Orphanage was incorporated in 1876, and occupied the building at 13 Anne Street. According to the directories, it actually opened in September, 1875, under the charge of the Sisters from St. Margaret's Sisterhood of Boston. In 1886 it was accepted as a trust by St. Anne's Parish, and the name was changed to the Theodore Edson Orphanage, in memory of Edson, who had died in 1883 (Contributions, v. 4, 1889, p. 213).

In 1914 the orphanage building was remodeled, and a large guild hall, fifty feet by one hundred feet, was added for use as a parish house. This brick addition, visible in the 1924 atlas, replaced the earlier wooden ell which is shown in the previous atlases and maps. Apparently after that time dependent children were placed in homes, rather than being cared for in the orphanage (Historical Sketch, 1925, p. 82).

The house facing Kirk Street was built within the last few years.

Sources

1832, 1841, 1850 maps.

1879, 1896, 1906, 1924, 1936 atlases.

1886 Lowell city directories.

Contributions of the Old Residents' Historical Association, v. I, 1879, p. 139; v. 3, 1887, p. 261.

Cowley, Charles, History of Lowell, 1868, p. 56.

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMENT

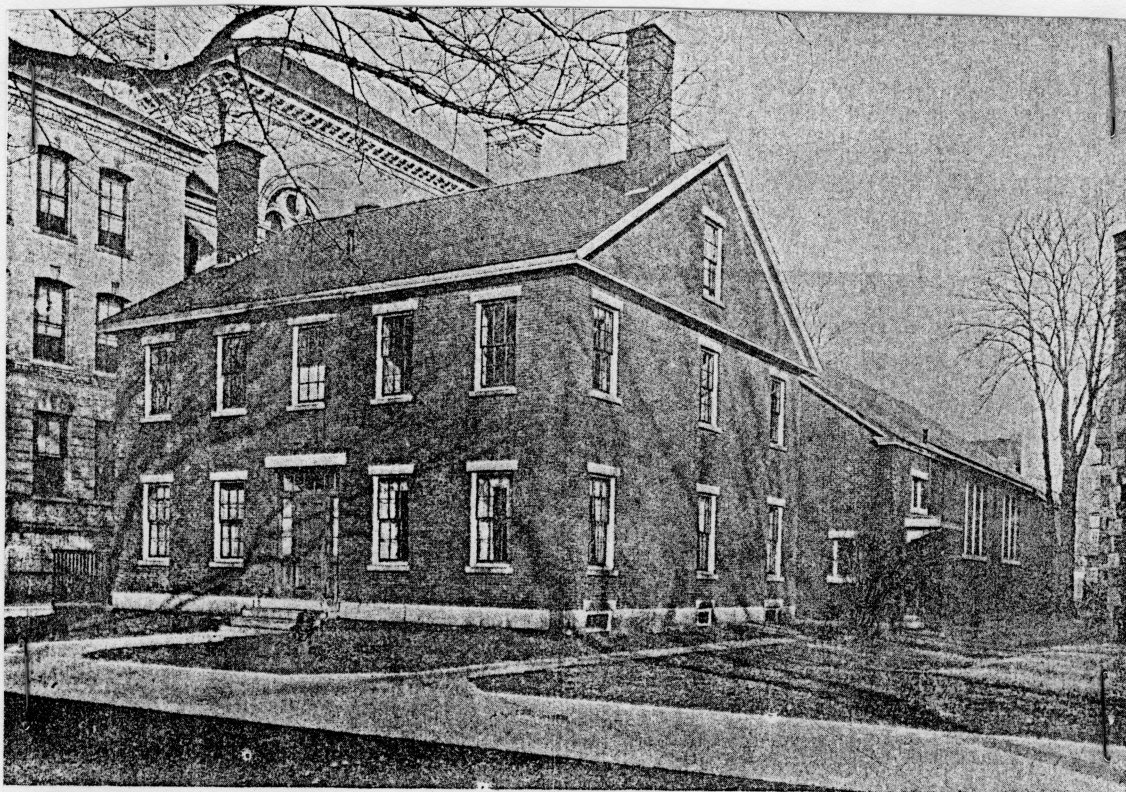
This brick structure covers most of its site, and the potential for recovering archeological remains from the property is low.

ADDRESS: 10 KIRK STREET

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View from east of modern addition to St. Anne's Hall. Photograph taken by SBRA, May, 1979.



ST. ANNE'S PARISH HOUSE

View from west of Benjamin French House/St. Anne's Hall. From Historical Sketch of St. Anne's Church, 1925, opp. p. 76.