

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SWN.201
Historic Name:	Mason, William P. House
Common Name:	Graham's Tavern
Address:	5 Mason St
City/Town:	Swansea
Village/Neighborhood:	North Swansea;
Local No:	163;
Year Constructed:	C 1860
Architectural Style(s):	Gothic Revival;
Use(s):	Hotel or Inn; Other Commercial; Post Office; Single Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Politics Government;
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register MRA (08/08/1990); Nat'l Register Individual Property (08/08/1990);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Wood Clapboard; Foundation: Stone, Cut;
Demolished	No



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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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PL - N. SWAN
USGS - E. PROV.

AREA

FORM NO.

AE

163-201

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Swansea, Mass. MRA
SWANSEA

Address 5 Mason Street

Historic Name William P. Mason House

Present residence

Original hotel, store, post office

DESCRIPTION
ca. 1860

Source maps of Swansea and Bristol County

Style Gothic Revival

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings garage and shed (ca. 1930)

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

none

Condition fair

Moved no Date ---

Acreage less than one acre east corner

Setting Situated on northeast corner of

Old Providence Road facing Mason Street

in a rural, residential area of north-

western Swansea known as Barneyville

Recorded by Kay Flynn/K. Broomer

Organization Swansea Historical Commission

Date March 1988/November 1989

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

(see attached map)

UTM REFERENCE 19 311050 4626810

USGS QUADRANGLE East Providence, RI-MA 1971/1970

SCALE 1:24000



NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The William Mason House, an intact vernacular example of the Gothic Revival style, was built in conjunction with the growth of the village at Barneyville to the west in the third quarter of the 19th century. The house served as a hotel and housed other services associated with the village in the late 19th century. The house retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association and meets Criteria A and C on the local level.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

This 1½-story, clapboarded, side-gabled dwelling illustrates the incorporation of Gothic Revival style features into the standard Swansea three-quarter cottage form. The entry on the asymmetrical, four-bay facade is marked by an off-center cross gable in the third bay. Shielding the entry is a pitched door hood on brackets with a decorative truss. Other distinguishing features include overhanging eaves, bracketed pent hoods over first floor windows, double windows on the side elevations, and 2/2 sash. A gabled 1½-story rear ell has a three-bay porch with turned posts and spindle frieze and balustrade. Few intact examples of the Gothic Revival survive in Swansea, a town dominated by the Greek Revival and Italianate vernacular forms of the third quarter of the 19th century.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

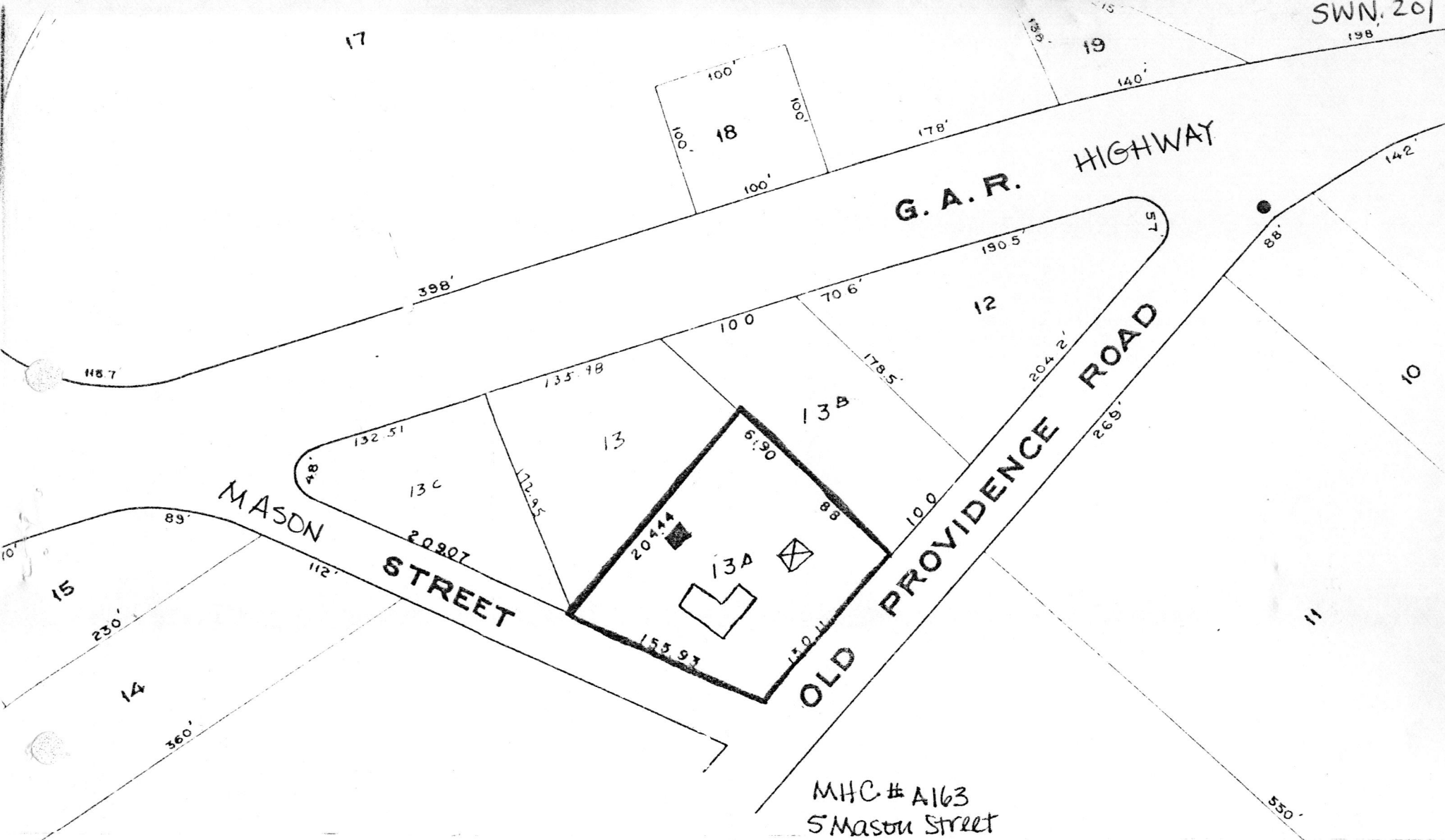
Located on Old Providence Road, a segment of the colonial route connecting Swansea to Providence, Rhode Island, the Mason House was built on the site of a stagecoach tavern, known as Graham's tavern as late as ca. 1850. During the second half of the 19th century, the present structure served the village of Barneyville in several capacities. William P. Mason operated both a hotel and store in this building in the early 1870s. In 1872, Mason succeeded Mason Barney, Jr. as postmaster of Barneyville, and by 1895 the village's branch post office had moved from Barneyville Road to this house. The post office had been established in the 1830s in response to rapid growth in this north-western section of Swansea. The house likely reverted to residential use in the early 20th century, following the demise of jewelry manufacturing--the village's last active industry--and the folding of the street railway system that had traversed Swansea in the present Route 6 corridor about 25 yards east of this house.




The Mason House has been excluded from the Barneyville Historic District, located one-quarter to one-half mile to the west, due to the amount of contemporary infill construction between the house and the district's eastern boundary.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Wright, O.O., History of Swansea, pp.89-90 (post offices), pp.180-181 (Mason family)
ca. 1849 map of Swansea and 1871 and 1895 atlases of Bristol County
Helen Pierce, Swansea Historical Society, interview, 11/89.

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- KEY
-  = house
 -  = garage
 -  = shed



PROPERTY MAP
TOWN OF SWANSEA
 BRISTOL COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS