

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

018-0008

Salem

WNH.136

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

**Town/City:** Wenham

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Wenham Village

## Photograph



East and façade (north) elevations.

**Address:** 17 Cherry Street

**Historic Name:** John and Helen Caves House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Residence

Original: Single Family Residence

**Date of Construction:** 1893

**Source:** Conant Photograph No. 0175 caption; deeds.

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne

**Architect/Builder:** Not known

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite, cut

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards and trim

Roof: Asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** none visible

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Garage and entrance addition (2006)

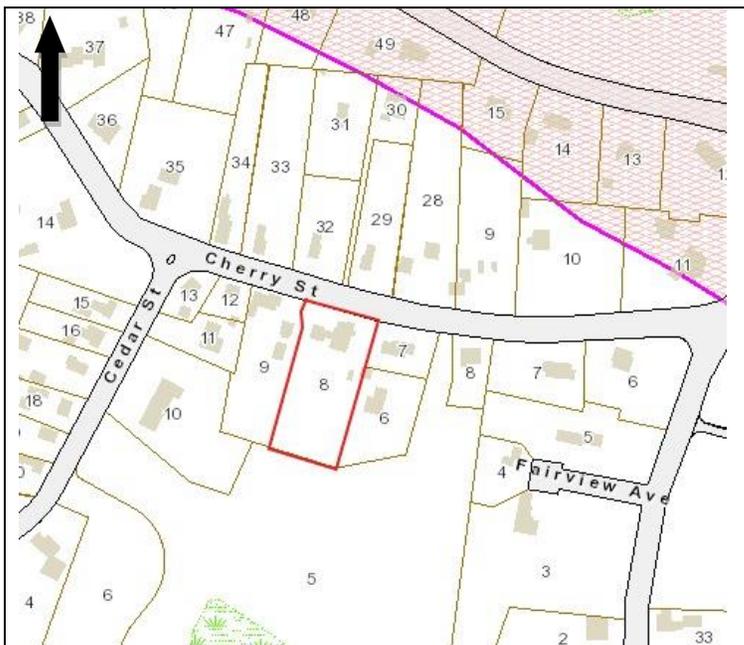
**Condition:** Excellent

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.97 acre

**Setting:** Densely built residential neighborhood, principally developed from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> c. Located at eastern end of main thoroughfare between Wenham village and western part of town.

## Locus Map



Map #s are last digits of parcel #s, not street #s.

**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero for

**Organization:** Wenham Historical Commission

**Date:** June 2017

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

WENHAM

17 CHERRY STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

WNH.136

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.*

17 Cherry Street is positioned at the front of a large, generally rectangular lot, behind a modest setback. Maintained chiefly in turf, the property is lined by a split rail fence and row of young evergreen trees along the street edge; the fence continues around the east side of the lot. The house consists of a main block with a subsidiary modern addition, accessed by a wide paved driveway on the west side.

The main block rises 2½ stories from a random ashlar foundation to a side-gabled volume at the front of the building; pitched roofs are visible on both sides at the rear of this volume, but their form is not clear from the street. One chimney is offset in the side-gabled front volume; another is visible at the very back of the house. Walls are clad with wood clapboards and trimmed with wood sill boards and corner boards; a prominent frieze forms pediments on all visible gables. All visible tympanums are sheathed with decoratively patterned wood shingles, which flare out at the base of the half-story. Windows typically have 2/2 sash, molded casings, and operable wood shutters.

The asymmetrical façade (north elevation) features a one-bay, pedimented pavilion at the west, anchored at the base with a bay window set diagonally to face the adjacent front porch. A small window with a pointed top is centered in the tympanum of this pavilion. The east portion of the façade has a single-leaf Victorian door set in the middle and one window aligned vertically on each floor in the eastern bay. A one-story porch spanning this part of the façade has decoratively bracketed posts and a wood railing.

The east elevation contains a two-story angled bay window towards the front, a small hip-roofed projection (perhaps a former entry vestibule) in the center of the wall, and a rectangular window centered in the half-story of the side gable. The west elevation has one bay of windows towards the front and a one-bay, two-story gabled pavilion appended to the side gable. Extending to the west of the house is a one-story entrance foyer with a side-gabled roof, a center entrance with single leaf door and half-height sidelights, and a full-width porch with Tuscan columns and a segmental arch over the entrance bay. The addition terminates in a large, 1½ story, side-gabled garage. Its façade has an offset, very slightly projecting cross-gabled pavilion with two vehicle bays under a continuous, shed-roofed hood and paired 2/2 windows centered in the half-story. The foyer and garage addition were constructed in 2006.

Excellently preserved and maintained, 17 Cherry Street is a fine example of upper middle class, Victorian period housing in Wenham. The house is notable for its size and scale, lively massing, variety of wall cladding, large windows, assertive fascia trim, and ornamental front porch. The sizeable entrance and garage addition is complementary in scale, massing, materials, and detailing.

## 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.*

John A. Caves (1836-1909) grew up on Cherry Street with his parents Solomon and Elizabeth Caves. John married Helen Tyler (1844-1922) in 1862 and the couple lived with his parents on Cherry Street while John worked as a shoemaker. Son Horace was born in 1864 and daughter Lizzie was born in 1867. The 1888 city directory indicates that John had a new job and was working as a "horse car driver." In the years before the electrified trolley came to Wenham in 1895, horses pulled open-air carts along the routes. Around 1893, it is reported that the Solomon Caves house was "moved down the street" and John Caves built the large Queen Anne dwelling on the site of the Solomon Caves house. (*Wenham in Pictures and Prose*: 117) In 1900, John and Helen Caves were living here with their daughter, Elizabeth, and her first husband, Lewis Goodrich. After John's death,

*Continuation sheet 1*

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WENHAM

17 CHERRY STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNH.136

Helen moved in with son Horace and his family on Cherry Street. The 1910 map indicates Helen Caves living in a large house on the north side of Cherry Street while the house she and her husband lived in on the south side was occupied by H.B. Butler. It is noteworthy that this large house on the north side of the street does not appear in early maps. It could have been that the Solomon Caves house was moved to this site. However, that house is no longer extant. Houses on the opposite side of the street at number 20 and 22 Cherry Street were constructed circa 1910 for the Caves children, Horace and Lizzie, and their families.

The 1910 atlas includes H. B. Butler at 17 Cherry Street. This is likely Horace Blagdon Butler (1833-1910). Butler was a member of the locally-prominent Kimball family through his maternal line. In 1905, H.B. Butler is included in a directory of Boston banking directors as Secretary and Treasurer of Enterprise Co-Operative Bank and as a Trustee of Sumner Savings Bank. The 1910 census supports this information. In 1910, 76-year-old Butler was living on Meridian Street in Boston with son Lyman and daughters Blanche and Mary. During these years, Butler is listed in Wenham city directories as a summer resident. By 1920, Blanche and Mary are included in the census as residents 17 Cherry Street in Wenham. Mary Butler appears in Wenham city directory listings until 1960.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

- Bankers' Service Company, ed. *Directory of Directors in the City of Boston and Vicinity: 1905*. Boston: Bankers' Service Company. 1905.
- Beers, D.G. & Co. *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts*. 1872.
- City Directories. 1870, 1888, 1901, 1909, 1918, 1924, 1932. Ancestry.com.
- Janes, Annette V. with the Wenham Museum. *Images of America: Wenham*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011. (John Caves is pictured on page 49.)
- Massachusetts Census. 1855. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts birth indices. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts death indices. Ancestry.com.
- Massachusetts marriage indices. Ancestry.com.
- No author. *Thomas Butler and His Descendants: A Genealogy of the descendants of Thomas and Elizabeth Butler, of Butler's Hill, South Berwick, Maine, 1674-1886*. New York. 1886. Accessed through Ancestry.com.
- United States Census for 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940. Ancestry.com.
- Walling, Henry Francis. *A Topographical Map of Essex County, Massachusetts...* Smith & Worley, 1856.
- Walker, George H. & Co., *Atlas of Essex County*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co., 1884.
- Walker Lithography and Publishing Company. *Atlas of the Towns of Topsfield, Ipswich, Essex, Hamilton and Wenham, Essex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Walker Lithography & Co., 1910.
- Wenham Historical Association & Museum, Inc. *Wenham in Pictures and Prose*. Wenham: Wenham Historical Association & Museum. 1992. (Picture of house is on page 117.)
- Wenham Tax Assessor records.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

WENHAM

17 CHERRY STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

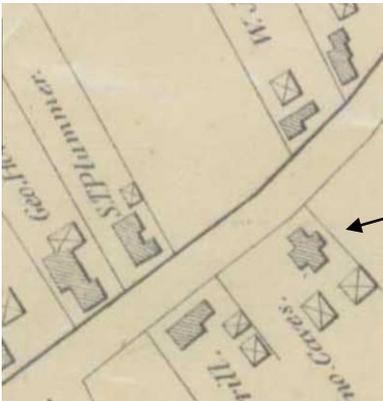
Area(s) Form No.

WNH.136

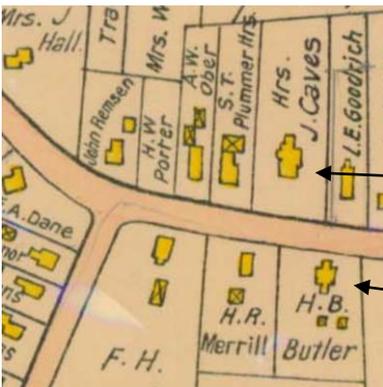
**SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES**



Photo 2. Façade (north) and west elevations



1884 Location of Caves house on south side of Cherry Street.



1910 Location of Caves house on north side of Cherry Street.  
Former Caves house is shown as residence of H.B. Butler.

**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**

Criteria Considerations:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**     **E**     **F**     **G**

Statement of Significance by Stacy Spies  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The neighborhood located at the intersection of Cherry Street and Cedar Street is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The district retains integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association. Consisting of well-preserved houses dating from ca. 1790 through ca. 1915, the Cherry Street-Cedar Street district meets Criterion A for its association with the development as a neighborhood of farmers and tradespeople. Houses are typically well-preserved one and two-story frame dwellings on stone foundations. The majority of houses in the district feature vernacular Greek Revival, gable-front forms. Several of these houses retain Greek Revival details such as door surrounds. Vernacular forms of Federal, Georgian, and Colonial Revival styles are also represented. 10 Cedar Street is a contributing feature of this district.

Cherry Street developed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century as an east-west connector between two major north/south roadways: Main Street and present-day Topsfield Road. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century deeds refer to Cherry Street as "the road to Topsfield." With the growth of Wenham village during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the village expanded westward along the "the road to Topsfield" between Main Street and present-day Monument Street. Cedar Street was laid out ca. 1825 and was known as "the road to North Beverly." The earliest residents were farmers. However, by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, residents were more typically tradespeople, especially cordwainers, and, without a need for agricultural land, constructed their houses on small lots near the village center. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, residents, in addition to shoe workers, included streetcar drivers, laborers, and teamsters.