

State of Connecticut
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford 06106

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No.: 56
UTM	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY:
 Buildings & Structures

SURVEY OF GUILFORD, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, 06437
 June-December 1981

IDENTIFICATION

1. ADDRESS 1 Broad Street
(map 39, lot 71)
2. NAME
(historic) Abel Chittenden
NAME
(common)
3. USE
(historic)
USE
(present) Private house and barn
4. IF MOVED, WHEN AND FROM WHERE:



DESCRIPTION

5. ARCHITECT
6. DATE 1804 BUILDER STYLE Federal
7. ALTERATIONS A large addition for a ballroom was made to the rear with a polygonal end, cobblestone chimney, and diamond pane sash - work probably at the turn of the 20th century. Brackets under the cornice at the main roof may date from this time or earlier. Screened porch added on east side.
8. NOTABLE FEATURES Palladian window, arched doorway and entry porch with frieze of diamond-shaped cut-outs. 12/12 sash. Distinguished fencing, spacious grounds and outbuildings (see below), now divided with adjoining property.
9. ARCHITECTURAL-HISTORICAL
See Continuation Sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

SOURCES

10. SOURCES Tercentenary Committee; Dorothy Whitfield Society '76; Connecticut Historical Commission '72; Anna Chittenden Thayer; Steiner; Joel E. Helander, Guilford Long Ago; Shore Line Times, Bicentennial, p. 29.; Photographs: Guilford Keeping Society.

In all categories below, check more than one box if applicable.

If you have not actually made certain of the answer to a given question, either leave it blank or write "inferred" after the checked box; or, if drawn from a previous investigator, give source.

11. MATERIALS

- Clapboard, Wood Shingle, Board & Batten, Brick, Fieldstone, Cut Stone, Stucco, Concrete, Cobblestone, Asbestos Shingle, Asphalt Siding, Aluminum/Vinyl, Other:

12. STRUCTURE

- Wood Frame, Post & Beam, Balloon, Masonry, Iron or Steel, Concrete, Other:

13. ROOF

- Pitched, Saltbox, Gambrel, Gable-front, Cross-gable, Mansard, Hip, Flat Hip, Flat, Shed, False Dormer, Sawtooth, Other: Tower(s), Monitor, Cupola, Dormered Gable, Dome, Wood Shingle, Asphalt Shingle, Slate, Metal, Other:

14. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 1/2

APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS:

LOT SIZE: 1 1/3 ACRE (APPROX)

15. CONDITION: Exterior

- Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Bad

16. CONDITION: Structure

- Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Bad

17. OUTBUILDINGS (visible from public road)

- Barn(s), Carriage House, Garage, Shed(s), Shop(s), Other (well, stand, greenhouse, gazebo, privy, etc.):

18. LANDSCAPING (visible from public road)

- Planted Grounds, Garden, Terracing, Plaza, Court, Stone Wall(s), Pickett Fence, Iron Fence, Post & Rail, Other:

19. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- Town Street, Rural, Semi-rural, Clustered Growth, Development, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Residential, Vacation, now or originally, Open, Wooded, Lakefront, Coastal, Salt marsh, Of outstanding scenic/architectural value, Of scenic/architectural value, Of supportive value to contiguous scenic/architectural area, Neutral, Other:

20. ROLE OF BUILDING IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

- Vital, Important, Supportive, Neutral, Other:

21. OWNERSHIP

- Public, Private, Interior accessible

INDEX NO. 56

22. Name D. PENAR

Date 7/21/81

Photographer D. PENAR

Date 7/21/81

Negative ROLL 14:28A OUTBLD820:3A

Organization: Guilford Preservation Alliance P.O. Box 199, Guilford, Conn. 06437

GLFD's NEG 14:28

OUTBLD8. 20: 4

23. THREATS TO BUILDING

- None Known, Renewal, Highways, Private Owner, Vandalism, Deterioration, Developers, Other: Zoning

24. SUBSEQUENT EVALUATIONS

DESCRIPTION

COMPILED BY

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#9. Architectural-Historical

Adjoining the slightly later house of Abraham Coan, Guilford's master builder whose work is described in the Survey Introduction, this house may possibly have been built by him, for it is one of the first examples in town of the new Federal style with which Coan is identified. Wide central hall, high ceilings, and pretty entry porch are typical of the new fashion; the basic form of the building however still belongs to the Colonial tradition--a conservatism typical of provincial architecture. The Palladian window over the door (whose central arch may at one time have been glazed?) seems to be the prototype for a small number of others that soon appeared around town--a distinctive group that constitute the architectural elite of the prosperous years before the War of 1812 (see, for example, 110 State Street and 6 Fair Street). Later additions at the rear of the house, although very different in manner, were made with the same degree of style and costliness, and they blend successfully--the octagonal end of the ballroom wing even evoking a familiar Federal form. The grounds are spacious and planted with old trees, fences and gateposts are still intact, and a dainty Gothic Revival barn stands out back. With central gable and board-and-batten siding, the barn suggests the style of A. J. Downing and may date from the 1850s; if so, the diamond paning of the windows was probably added later, perhaps at the same time as the ballroom wing. In the Birdseye View of Guilford in 1881, the barn seems to be drawn with an Italianate tower on the east end.

Abel Chittenden was descended from William Chittenden, one of the half-dozen or so leaders of the Guilford colony, and his land is William Chittenden's homelot, set out to him in 1639. Originally $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres (and later increased to 27 acres), this was one of the largest homelots granted to the first settlers. With a long frontage on the river and the salt meadows, it was regarded as one of the best locations in the town (the river land, now separated from the house by River Street, belonged to the property as late as this year, 1982, when it was given to the Guilford Land Trust by its recent owner, Howard S. Weaver, just before his death).

Abel Chittenden's son, Simeon Baldwin Chittenden, left Guilford for New York in 1843 where he made a fortune in the dry goods trade, becoming a director of insurance, railroad, and other companies, vice-president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, and later a Republican congressman. Four years before he left Guilford, his widowed mother had had to sell the house, which was bought by Danforth Nettleton, and it was in Nettleton's time that the handsome fence was built. Designed by Nettleton and built by his son Warren, the pickets run uninterruptedly and appear to have no supporting posts but are in fact supported by periodic iron rods, designed and painted to resemble the pickets. These in turn, instead of being nailed to the rails, are let into them through rectangular holes. At one time

there were 600 feet of this fencing, along Broad and both sides of River Street, and today the fence remains the key element of street design that makes the intersection of Broad and River Streets, with its framed vista of the salt meadows beyond, one of the town's memorable spots.

In 1851 Simeon Chittenden returned to his ancestral home and bought it back, buying with it (then and later) all of the original property, which included the Coan house next door which stood on the actual site of the William Chittenden homestead. In due course he converted all this into a summer estate on a splendid scale, and he must have set the town by its ears. He named the place Cranbrook after Cranbrook in Kent, where William Chittenden had come from, and he embellished the grounds with a deer park (later peacocks were substituted) and a fountain. He built the stone tower, now called Cranbrook Tower, as a windmill to supply water for the fountain, and it was also he who built the bowling alley beside the tower. These two buildings still stand but now belong to the Coan property (see 29 Broad Street).

Simeon Chittenden died in 1889. He had previously given the Coan house to his sister, Anna Hart Chittenden, and the Chittenden homelot became divided between (two of) their heirs, Anna Lusk and Anna Chittenden Thayer. Mrs. Thayer lived in this house until her death in 1962, when it was bought by Howard Weaver. Miss Lusk spent her summers in the house next door until the year of her death at the age of 98 in 1968. Except for the twelve years of Danforth Nettleton's possession, this land had been owned by Chittendens for roughly 325 years.



Addenda 1983

Add to Sources: Elizabeth Mills Brown MS notes.