

Atwater-Ciampolini House
321 Whitney Avenue
New Haven County
New Haven, Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-282
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5-NEWHA
31.

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

ATWATER-CIAMPOLINI HOUSE

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Location: 321 Whitney Avenue, Southeast corner of Whitney and Edwards Streets, New Haven County, New Haven, Conn.

Present Owner: Thompson & Peck, Incorporated, New Haven, Conn.

Present Occupant: Thompson & Peck, Incorporated

Present Use: Offices of insurance agency.

Statement of Significance: One of the few remaining examples in New Haven of the "shingle style" house of the 1890's. One of the forerunners of modern American domestic architecture.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which structure is built. Reference is to New Haven City Land Records.

1890 Deed recorded in Volume 417, page 132; Alfred P. and Katharine V. Rockwell to Helen G. Atwater (wife of Charles E.).

1916 Property transferred to the heirs, Helen G. Atwater and Jean H. Atwater, by announcement, Probate Court, Volume 770, page 70.

1922 Marriage of Helen G. Atwater to Ettore Ciampolini on June 10 (Dept. of Vital Statistics). House remained in ownership and title of Mrs. Ettore Ciampolini, widow.

July 15, 1968. House purchased by Thompson & Peck, Inc.

2. Date of erection: 1890-2

3. Architect: Babb, Cook and Willard of New York City.
George Fletcher Babb
Walter Cook, FAIA, 1843-1916
Daniel W. Willard

4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Plans at office of Thompson & Peck, Inc., 321 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

5. Alterations and additions: Two-story, 5 bay addition built at rear of house, completed in Sept. 1969. It

provides more than 3,000 feet of floor space and repeats the general style and character of the original building. Alteration designed by Henry Miller, AIA, of the firm of Davis, Cochran, Miller, Berman and Noyes, New Haven, Conn.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: None.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: The New Haven County Land Records for the City of New Haven, Orange Street, New Haven, Connecticut.

Arnold G. Dana, "New Haven Old and New," unpublished scrapbooks in the archives of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, 114 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

Interviews with Mr. John D. Hoag, Art Librarian, Chairman of Standards Committee, the New Haven Preservation Trust, Art Library, Yale University, York Street, New Haven, Connecticut.

Interview with Mrs. Ettore Ciampolini.

Correspondence with Robert W. Knott, Chairman of the Board, Thompson & Peck, Inc. 321 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut. (1970).

2. Secondary and published sources: The New Haven City Directory, 1840 to 1952. Copies in the Yale Library, the Public Library, the Town Clerk's office, and the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library.

Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955, p.p. 15 & 153, Ill. #154.

Prepared by: Jonathan B. Conant
Research Assistant
National Park Service

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A good example of shingle style residence with shingled exterior and strip window treatment on gabled front. Discussed and illustrated in Scully, op. cit.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent, well maintained by owner, descendant of original owner.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main block of the house with east rear one-story ell measures approximately 51'-6" frontage by 60'-0" depth (excluding porch). The house is basically a rectangle of three-and-one-half stories (finished floors) with a short two-story wing on the northeast corner. Addition for offices added to rear (1969).
2. Foundations: Brick exterior. Interior not accessible.
3. Wall construction: Wooden frame with dark green shingle exterior finish.
4. Porches: Entrance porch, northwest corner, one story framed in wood with flat pedimented roof, slate floor and steps; leads to vestibule.

Southwest corner porch, one story, plain square wooden posts, simple balustrade and simple molded cornice with dentils at eave line; larger than entrance porch.

Northeast two-story rear porch is open on first floor, glazed on second floor.

5. Chimneys: Three brick chimneys; chimney stacks marked by two vertical channels on each side, have flared top edges.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance is wooden, four panelled.
 - b. Windows: Horizontal strip window treatment on the main (west) front is one of the distinguishing exterior features. On the first and second floors, windows and series of small rectangular raised panels between form strong horizontal motif.

Second floor windows vary in width. Strip of five low third floor windows in gable is framed in unit which projects slightly from wall plane. Single lower horizontal window is near apex of gable. Trim and panels are now painted light brown in contrast with dark shingles. Scully, op. cit., illustration #154.

Wooden sash is double-hung, one-over-one light. Storm windows are six-over-six light.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape; Gabled, with gable end facing Whitney Avenue.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Simple cornice with slight overhang. The raking cornice of gable has barge board with ornament of overlapping flat scallops.
- c. Dormers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan:

- a. First floor: Porch on north wall leads to vestibule and main stair hall. Beyond stair hall is larger southwest porch.

A wide, cased opening and grillage of small turned balusters (extending full height to ceiling), separates staircase from large reception hall in center of house. Reception hall, which has fireplace, is flanked by music-room and parlor, and is separated from them by almost room-width doors which slide into wall pockets. East of these rooms are the kitchen, pantry, and large dining room.

- b. Second floor: Similarly arranged around the large stair hall which is a definite spatial link to the first floor.
- c. Housekeeper's apartment on third floor.

2. Stairways: The treatment and location of main stairway creates a dominant interest in interior. The spacious landing is on the axis of the entrance door, with the main flight reversing direction. Panelled wall on landing and balustrade are natural light pine. Between balustrade and reception hall is a screen of turned balusters through which light filters into the reception hall. The profile of stair balusters differs from that in screen, creating a rich overall effect. There is a

second stairway between reception room and pantry. A modern residential elevator has been installed in pantry.

3. Flooring: Oak.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and wallpaper with wooden paneling in stair hall. Wallpaper in reception hall and above paneled wainscot is original heavily embossed lincrusta. Principal rooms have plaster cornices.
5. Doorways and doors: Both sliding and single leaved doors have four horizontal panels, second panel from top broader than others.
6. Decorative features and trim: Very shallow fine-scaled cornice moldings. Cartouche decorates roof peak on west front.
7. Notable hardware: All doorknobs are turned polished wood.
8. Lighting: Original gas chandeliers and sconces in some rooms. Brass chandelier in reception room combines gas candles with shaded incandescent lights. Modern electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Original fireplaces supplemented with central gas-fired heating system with radiators. Fireplaces have glazed tile fronts with simple wooden trim and shelves. Hall fireplace is faced with Roman brick. Opening is framed in wrought iron corresponding with wrought iron fire tools, mantel shelf is supported by modillions.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: On the southeast corner of Whitney Avenue and Edwards Street, facing Whitney Avenue on the northwest.
2. Outbuildings: None.
3. Landscaping, etc.: Rear yard enclosed with modern chain link fence and hedge.

Prepared by: Woodrow W. Wilkins
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
July 27, 1964

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the Summer, 1964 New Haven Project, jointly undertaken by the HABS and the New Haven Preservation Trust, and financed by "Mission 66" funds of the National Park Service with assistance from the NHPT, following a 1963 HABS inventory survey of old New Haven carried out by the NHPT under the direction of Professor Christopher Tunnard of Yale University, President.

The project was under the direction of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, James C. Massey, HABS Supervisory Architect, and was supervised by Architect Woodrow W. Wilkins, Professor of Architecture at the University of Kentucky, assisted by Ned Goode, Photographer, Frazier, Pennsylvania; Annette H. M. Gottschalk, William P. Hersey, and Charles R. Tichy, Student Assistant Architects and students at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Yale University, and Iowa State University, respectively; and Jonathan B. Conant, Research Assistant and student at Yale University.